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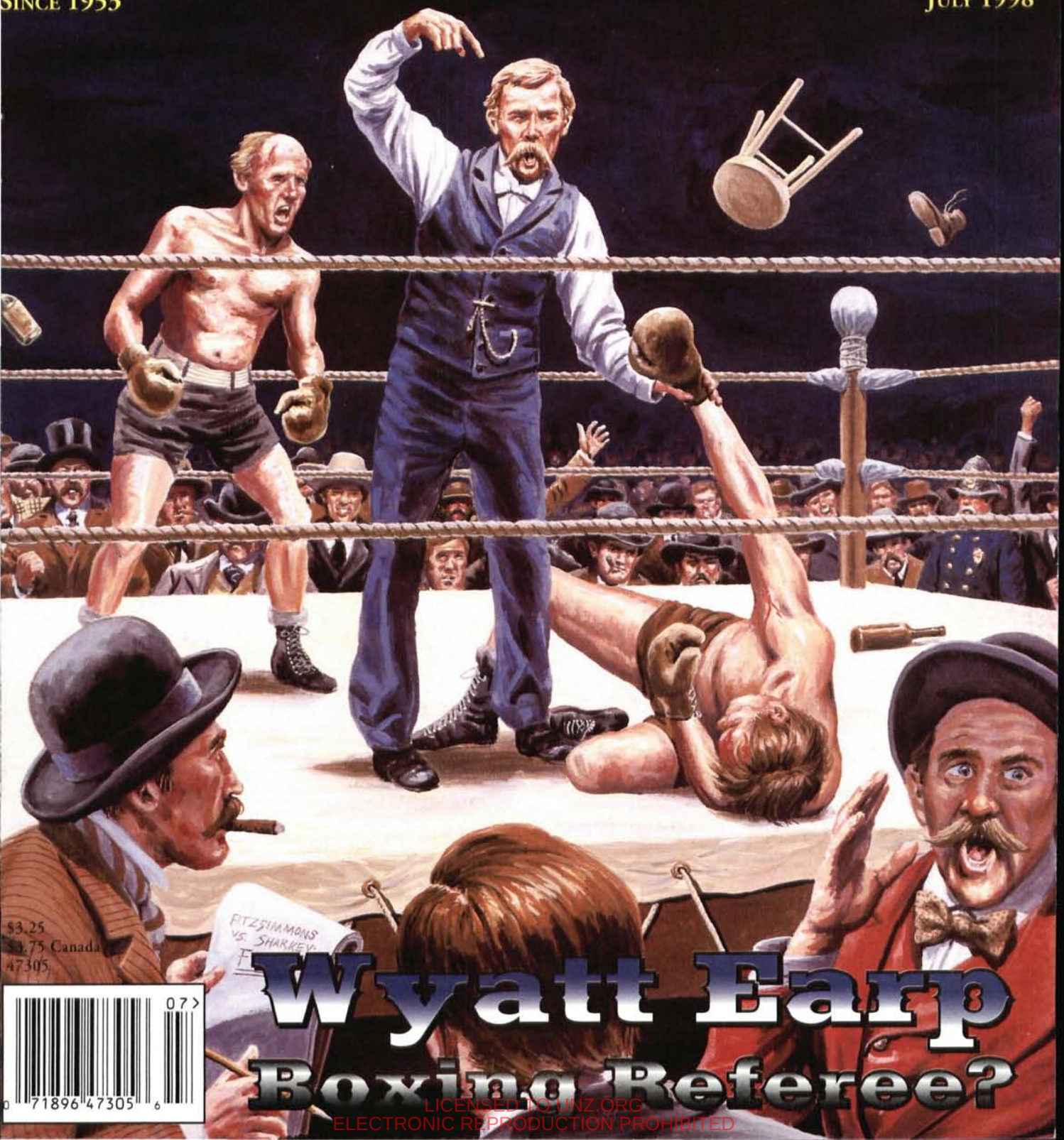

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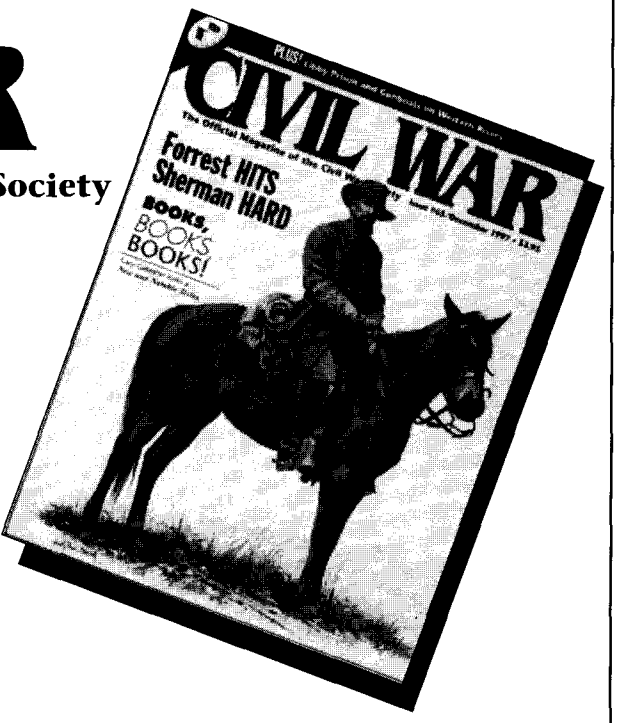

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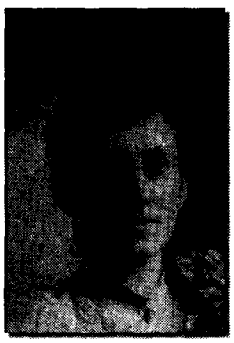

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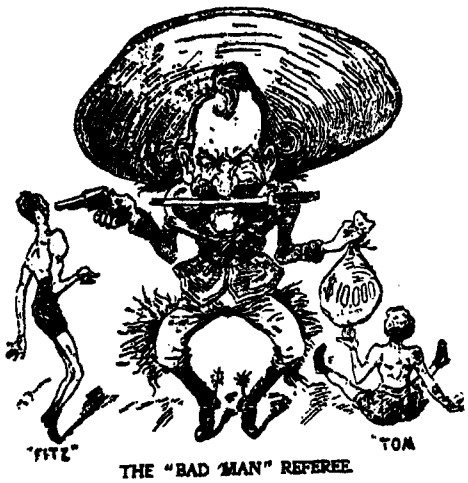
TRUE WEST

Our Cover

Wyatt Earp: Boxing Referee
By Gary Zaboly

July 1998
Vol. 45, No. 7
Whole No. 363



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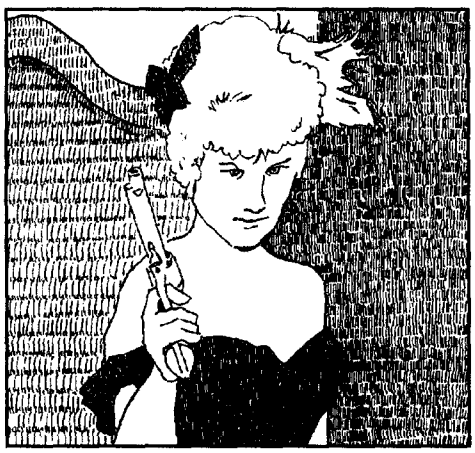

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38 **Where Did He Get the Gun?** *By Drew Gomber.* When Billy the Kid escaped from the Lincoln County Courthouse, someone provided him with a pistol. But who?

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46 **Easier to Catch Than to Keep.** *By Allen P. Bristow.* A short history of the calaboose, hoosegow, and the bat cave: the western jail.

50 **Traveling Lecturers of the West.** *By Kevin L. Cook.* Writers and humorists Mark Twain, Artemus Ward, Victoria Woodhull, and Oscar Wilde entertained the farthest reaches of the West.

54 **Massacre at Fort Robinson.** *By Gary Hinkley.* Faced with life under military control, Dull Knife leads his people toward freedom, with a heavy price.

60 **Who Can Find a Virtuous Woman?** *By Shirley Ayn Linder.* Sporting ladies have been portrayed in literature and film as laughing, fun-loving, and carefree. Unfortunately, the whore with a heart of gold was a rare commodity.

66 **Horsethief Canyon.** *By Norman Edward Rourke.* Located just south-east of Stillwater, the home of *True West*, a canyon high above the Cimarron served as a refuge for Oklahoma outlaws.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Howdy, ya'll!

It was 1953. *I Love Lucy* was on the television, *From Here to Eternity* was on the big screen, Louis L'Amour had just written *Hondo* (his first best-seller), and The Grand Old Opry was still a Saturday night radio staple. Roosevelt and Truman had just led the country to victory in Europe and the Pacific theater, and the economy was going nowhere but up. In the words of John Steinbeck, the world was "spinning in greased grooves."

Down in Austin, Texas, magazine publisher Joe Austell Small had an idea. A pretty simple one actually, heavily influenced by J. Marvin Hunter's *Frontier Times*: provide an adventure-hungry audience with a magazine devoted entirely to western stories. True western stories. Factual western stories. Engrossing western stories.

During the summer of 1953 the first issue of Joe Small's *True West* rolled off the presses. Containing authentic photos, lavish illustrations, and more articles than you could swing a cat at, it wasn't long before "Hosstail" realized he had a sure-fire winner on his hands. Forty-five years later his bet is still paying off.

True West not only gained an eager and faithful audience, but created an entirely new magazine genre. By the heyday of western enthusiasm in the 1960s, over a dozen or more magazines were jockeying for *True West*'s readers. Of all those monthly mags to come along, *True West* is the only one still publishing. Our sister rag, *Old West*, continues in the tradition of publishing as a quarterly, much like Hunter's original *Frontier Times*.

The pages of *True West* have hosted many memorable stories, and stories behind the stories. Some of western history's leading authors found their start in *True West*, and our offices have at times been a clubhouse for the likes of J. Frank Dobie, Walter Prescott Webb, Fred Gibson, Glenn Shirley, and many, many more.

True West not only offered western historians an outlet to share their research and debates, but was also a showcase for western artists who had no other public outlet for their love of the West. Some memorable artists who debuted on the cover or in our pages include Joe Grandee, Randy Steffen, Lisle Reedstrom, Richard Ignarski, Al Martin Napoletano, Taylor Oughton, Kim Mackey, Gary Zaboly, and Bob Boze Bell.

Like a modern Buffalo Bill with his Wild West shows, Joe Small literally introduced the American West to the world. At the height of *True West*, Hosstail's "simple rag" had over a half-million readers in the United States alone. Not bad for such a limited market.

Today, it's not uncommon to hear *True West* stories. Almost everyone I meet has one. "My granddad used to read *True West*...I loved those as a kid...Wow, you guys are still around?" It's almost impossible to find an antique or collectible shop that doesn't have a pile of battered offerings from Western Publications for sale. They literally are everywhere.

To mark forty-five wonderful years, we have chocked as many stories in this issue as we can fit between our pages; we even added eight pages for good measure. Most are tales you've heard before, although the angle you'll be looking at 'em is a bit different. One turn of the page and you'll hear from Hosstail himself, from his first editorial, explaining why *True West* exists, and why it should forever.

On behalf of Joe Small and his unique and fantastic vision, and all of the *True West* writers, artists, editors, and staff that have come before, I thank you, the reader, for forty-five fantastic years. Let's saddle up and ride for the fiftieth!

Marcus Huff

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Is This It?

By Joe "Hosstail" Small

If it isn't—by golly, we'll get it before we're done!

It won't be easy, see. We're setting out to do something new. We are attempting to put out a high class, top-notch authentic magazine on the old and modern West.

Hard row to hoe? Chum, trying to explain three blonde hairs on your shoulder, with the plushious gal who lost them still sitting on your lap, would be a snap compared to the job we face!

Old-timers write us: "If you print the truth about those rip-roaring days of the past, modern folks won't believe it—they'll think it's pure fiction!"

And from the modern folks: "You'll never please the old-timers. They will look for every little flaw and tear it to pieces!"

Then there are the folklorists: "You'll need their help, but they won't stay with you because they are too dreamy and hard to please," one man wrote.

Historical boys: "They all should subscribe to *True West*," one lady told me, "but if you get one date wrong, they'll cancel their subscriptions! Too, your stories must be dry fact to appeal to them."

The young folks? "Your stories must drip blood, screech with the roar of gunfire, and smell of powder smoke to hold them—and hold them you must to go over big."

Now tell me gentlemen—just how in the hell are you going to please a cross section of the American public like that with one magazine?

What to do? You take two more aspirins and wonder if that blood-sweated greenback you've been saving all these years for this "project of a lifetime" wouldn't be more wisely spent on a whirling wheel in Las Vegas!

Then your pig-headed training comes to the rescue. One dad-burned look at the situation as she lies would convince a three-warted hog that a "let's-run-one-story-for-each-group-and-try-to-please-them-all" book might prove to be just another magazine. So with a glint in my mean little eyes, I swept the desk clean, looked through a window into the clear, blue sky and made my pledge to whatever guiding force

it was that carried the old western frontiersman to safety through arrows, plague, and wilderness (odds almost as heavy as we face). It ran something like this: "Range Boss: To the best of our ability, we are going to publish an HONEST magazine on the West as it *really was* and *is*. It will be for people who want the facts along with their entertainment. We'll do the best we can to publish a true, original, interesting magazine, and we'll let the chips fall where they may—so help us God!"

And you know something, after making that little pledge, I got to thinking. Why wouldn't a magazine that takes interesting material and presents it just the way it happened please the folklorists, the old-timers, the modern-timers, historians, and even the kids? Maybe that's the answer. Whether you're a kid or a professor, if you're interested in the West, then you ought to like it dished out in the rough, unvarnished way the pioneers found it back in the old days. If you want a dreamland West—go read a fiction book!

So that's our pledge to you: if it happened, we're going to print it just the way it happened—to the best of our knowledge. Some of it may be a little raw; there may be some language that's a bit heavy; there will be many things you won't believe. If you think we do a bad job of it, then turn us out to graze. We're just going to do the best we can—and they tell me that's all a mule can do!

Sure we're going to slip up. Some dad-burned slicker may sell us a pure fiction piece which we think is true. That's where you come in. Tell us about it. Instead of sticking a knife in our ribs and walking around us, HELP us edit this magazine!

The point I am so lamely trying to make is this: It was, of course, a physical impossibility for the editors of *True West* to have been present every time a good story was born in the past. And, Chum, unless you were there—you can't be dead-sure just what happened! However, with you on the job, with our constantly increasing staff of authorities and experts of every type on the Old West as well as the New, by golly, it shouldn't be long before we have a magazine here that is tops in all the world for its true portrayal of the most fabulous era any country has ever seen—our so-called "Winning of the West."

Anytime you think I'm getting windy, cut trail on some of the real stuff in this issue and leave this drivel be. I've hit the most important

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Western Publications Archives

Fred Gibson, J. Frank Dobie, and Joe "Hosstail" Small share a laugh during the early days of *True West* in Texas.

points in the stuff you've just read, and from now on I'll be talking just to hear my hocks rattle.

However, there are several points on which I want to touch. Many of you have asked what caused us to come out with the only slick paper, true western magazine in the world. Maybe it's because I've always resented the picture a person forms in his mind of a low grade fiction publication when the term "western magazine" is mentioned. That's the kind of literature we've had, for the most part, to cover the most romantic era in our history.

I was discussing western stories with the president of a large bank some years ago. "Why doesn't someone publish a western magazine a man can leave on his desk?" he asked. He reached inside a drawer and brought out a "blood and thunder."

"I even read these," he confessed, "but I have to keep them hid!"

That scene stuck in my mind. I wondered how many thousands of people all over the country would like to see a "grown up" magazine published on the West—one that is well written, fast-moving, profusely illustrated, an ALL FACT magazine on old western badmen, gold rush days, cattle drives, Indian fights, ghost towns, cowboy experiences, outlaws, range wars, frontier life—the whole scene. I began to believe there were quite a few people who would read it if the thing was really done up first class.

So—*True West* will be a magazine you can keep on your desk.

One more little tirade and I'll get off this particular point: We're going to try and give you authenticity of the journals, plotting and fast movement of the pulps—a sort of in-between dry fact and impossible blood and thunder. In short, let's have fact, but let's keep it moving! And why shouldn't fact be fast and interesting? Why do 99 western stories out of every 100 you see in print today have to be fiction? We contend that if an old-time badman walks into a bar, gets into an argument with another badman and they shoot it out—we believe an accurate account can be just as spine-tingling as a fictionized version. And it should have added appeal in the reader's knowing that this thing *actually happened!*

All right, I've told you what we are going to do—now tell us how close we've come to it in this first issue. There's some good stuff in it, we think, but give us time to hit our stride.

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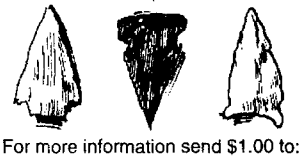
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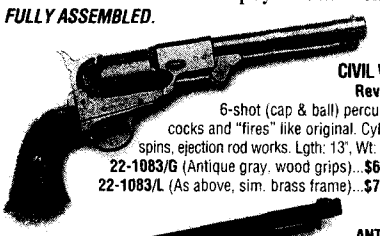

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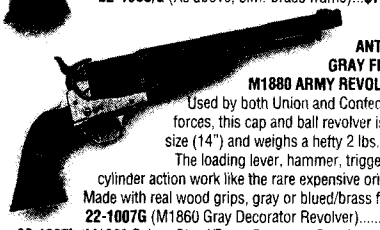

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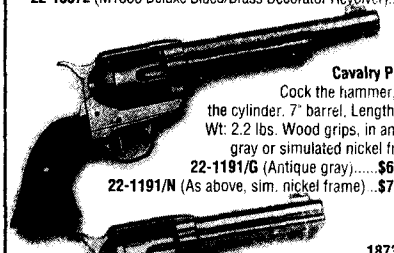

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22-1186/G (Antique gray).....**$66 PPD**
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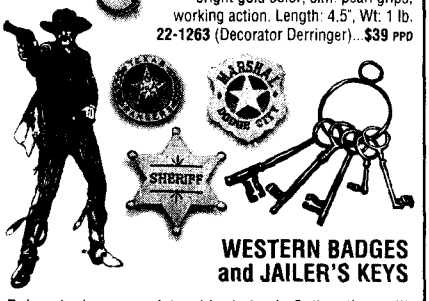

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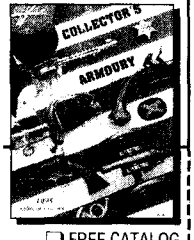

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Remembering True West

Leon C. Metz
Historian, author, lecturer.
***True West* Reader since 1960.**

My first article, "The Baron of Arizona," was published back in 1966. It was a terribly written piece. The editor, Hosstail, suggested that I write the University of Arizona and get photos, which I did. They cost me $10 each.

The article wasn't published for a year or two, but finally appeared and the editor sent me a $25 check. This was the first money I ever earned from writing, and I wrote Hosstail and asked if I could frame the check instead of cashing it. He suggested that I xerox the check and frame the copy. I did, and still have it.

Richard Ignarski
Artist, Western collector.
***True West* Reader since 1959.**

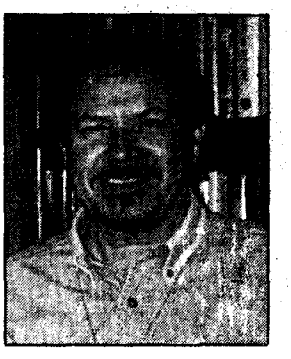
True West, to me, means quality, factual information. It's like an old friend. My favorite *True West* artists were always Gene Shortridge, Taylor Oughton, and Joe Grandee. Now add Gary Zaboly to the list.

Marley Brant
Biographer, author, lecturer.
***True West* Reader since 1978.**

True West is one of the leaders in its field when it comes to original, exciting western art and unpublished historical photography.

Having spent much time pouring over data-heavy academic books and articles, it is always refreshing to sit down with an issue of *True West* and enjoy learning about an exciting event in history, or discover an unheralded Western character. Sitting down with an issue of *True West* is like sitting down to visit with a group of old friends, made all the more entertaining because of the mutual interests and respect for differing opinions.

Robert G. McCubbin
Western History collector.
***True West* Reader since 1953.**



I've been reading *True West* since the first issue. I'm a "charter member" (I was fifteen years old).

My interest in authentic Western History and collecting books and photos relative to gunfighters, lawmen, and outlaws has kept me reading *True West* over the years. I would like to see *True West* become more of a forum for discussing controversial areas of Western History... including disputed photos.

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Rick Miller
Historian, author, lecturer.
***True West* Reader since 1968.**

True West is the only surviving magazine that has maintained its integrity by presenting factual articles by respected writers. At least one evening a month I can put aside the rest of my life, temporarily, to slip back a hundred years or so.

Kim Mackey
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True West is an important cultural showcase, something so often lacking in good literature today. The flavor of real events, things that are more exciting and colorful than that of fiction, is what makes *True West* worth reading. My favorite *True West* writer is Glenn Shirley, a true wordsmith!

Frederick Nolan
Historian, author, screenwriter.
***True West* Reader since 1957.**

More than any other magazine, *True West* attracts the widest range of writing and the broadest spectrum of opinion. It has been one of the few constants in a world of ever-changing fads in Western History. It never talks down to the reader and tries to be fair to all. It's always been a welcome friend.

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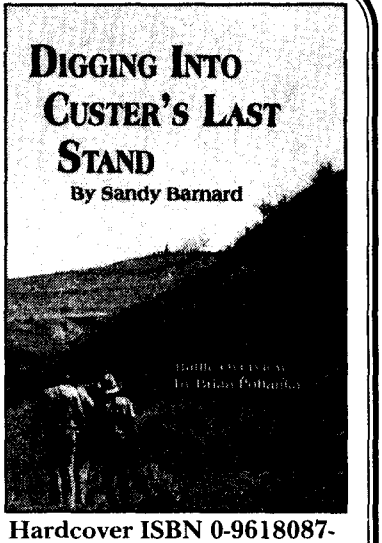

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since the summer of 1957 when I saw it for the first time in a magazine rack at Desert Drug in Kingman, Arizona. It hit me right between the eyes. I avidly read and reread every article and couldn't wait for the next issue to come out. My father had a gas station on Route 66 called Al Bell's Flying A. I worked there all summer, icing jugs for tips. I distinctly remember that as September rolled around I had saved just enough money to buy Ed Bartholomew's *Biographical Album of Western Gunfighters* (which was advertised in *True West*). I sent off for it and then breathlessly waited for it to arrive. That book became my bible.... I even took the book to college, and it has survived several dozen moves over the years. In fact, if there ever is a fire in my studio, that is one of the first things I'd jump through the flames to save.

In 1992 I published my first Old West book, *The Illustrated Life and Times of Billy the Kid.* And then for the next two years I published similar books on Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday. All three books are heavily influenced by *True West* and Ed Bartholomew. I thank you for the many years of inspiration and enlightenment. You have given me so much to steal from.

I was so proud to be on the cover of *True West* in 1997. It was the fulfillment of a childhood dream. As I stood in the front window of Desert Drug on old Route 66, I fantasized about someday being in the magazine. Well, it took me forty years, but I made it!

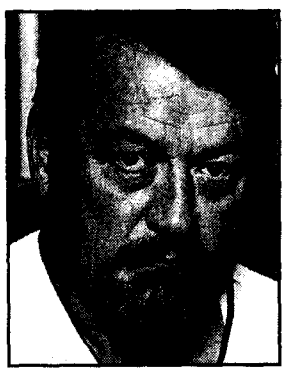
Thanks, *True West*, for sticking to your guns. You are a true friend to anyone who values the truth about the Old West. Amen.

Gary Zaboly
Western Artist
***True West* Reader since 1963.**

True West is almost as influential in my early life as Western movies and television. The magazine also brought visual as well as verbal life to the actual history. It touched upon the insignificant events sometimes, and these were also a part of the West. *True West* continues to be the only reliable publication encompassing all the history. It avoids the slick and glossy approach, and thank God.

True West is like a living being: sharp and dull; brilliant and mundane; engrossing and trivial; cheerful and morose; gregarious and moody. In other words, people like it because it is alive.

Glenn Boyer
Biographer, author, lecturer.
***True West* Reader since 1953.**



I don't read *True West* regularly these days, but the subject matter is a winner. Almost everyone is intrigued with some aspect of the Old West. My own articles are my favorite, naturally. Just kidding. There have been a lot of good articles in the magazine over the years.

Richard Dillon
Historian, author, professor.
***True West* Reader since 1953.**

Since it surely ain't broke, I would sure hate to see *True West* get "fixed." Continue the old Hosstail tradition. Solid, well-researched articles which balance authenticity with popularity. It's "scholarly" without being academic; popular without being superficial. *True West* is informative and interesting reading on, far and away, the best region in the United States. Nope, make that the world!

John Boessencker
Historian, author, attorney.
***True West* Reader since 1967.**

True West is the last western mag. The "others" are glossy reprint/rehash rags with nothing new or worthwhile. The fresh

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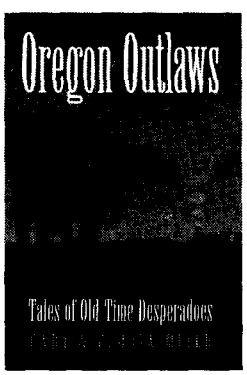
Oregon Outlaws



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research on known and unknown westerners is what has kept me reading. The muster of great authors who have appeared in *True West* is too long to list.

Dave Johnson
Biographer, author, editor.
***True West* Reader since 1956.**

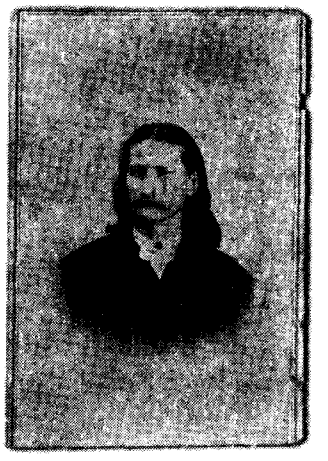
True West represents a passing era of the United States that will never come again. With the mad rush and the greed to develop (destroy) every square inch of land in the world, *True West* provides not only factual stories of the past, but a way of life that is lacking today. Moreover, the people at *True West* have always come across as decent, warm human beings not too caught up in their own wonderfulness to help others. They are my kind of people. Add to that that *True West* is usually on the cutting edge of history and does not concentrate on any one topic. The list goes on, but you get the point.

Dan Buck
Author, researcher, lecturer.
***True West* Reader since 1989.**

I enjoy Western History and *True West* offers something new and exciting every month. It's almost impossible to single out one, but I think my favorite contributors are Leon Metz. Robert DeArment, and Donna Ernst.

Harold L. Edwards
Historian, author, lecturer.
***True West* Reader since 1955.**

True West is part of an extended family, those who are interested in the Old West, be they researchers, writers, or simply interested readers. I am pleased to have been a part of *True West*'s history.



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Beginning with Wild Bill Hickok in the March 1996 issue of *True West*, readers have enjoyed the special, four-page pullout section known as *True West* Legends.

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THE 10 BEST-DRESSED WESTERNERS

By Bill O'Neal

Since there are annual Best-Dressed, and Worst-Dressed, lists which generate contemporary interest, a list of the Ten Best-Dressed Men of the Old West also seems appropriate. (So many western women dressed fashionably that it would be virtually impossible to determine the Ten Best-Dressed Women.) While a great many western men wore only rough, utilitarian garb, a number exercised vanity and a sense of fashion suitable to the frontier.

Mountain men sported fringed, beaded buckskin jackets and placed a fur cap, complete with the animal's face, atop their flowing locks. Gamblers wore fancy vests, silk hats, and flashy jewelry. Cowboys were aware of the popular appeal of their colorful attire: high-heeled boots, wide-brimmed hats, bandanas, spurs, and chaps. Cattle barons and railroad builders could afford the latest Victorian styles from the East.

A selection of the Best-Dressed Shootist, Rancher, Gambler, Lawman, Cavalry Officer, Outlaw, Indian Chief, Scout, Dentist, and Journalist offers ten frontier notables whose appearance matched the prominence of their deeds.

Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

Best-Dressed Shootist: Wild Bill Hickok

The Prince of Pistoleers reigned atop the frontier of sartorial splendor. Tall and well-built, James Butler Hickok wore his tawny hair shoulder-length in the style favored by plainsmen. "He was rather fantastically clad," reported Libbie Custer. Fellow frontiersman Theodore Davis stated that Hickok was "by nature a dandy."

For riding and scouting he donned beaded and fringed buckskin suits, moccasins or high boots, double-breasted shirts, and flat-brimmed hats cocked at a rakish angle. But whenever possible he dressed up in such items as houndstooth pants, a cape with plaid lining, an assortment of fancy waistcoats and neckties, jeweled collar studs, a coat with satin facings, and a sash into which he tucked a brace of revolvers, butts forward.

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Best-Dressed Rancher: Teddy Roosevelt

When he decided to plunge into the life of a Dakota rancher, wealthy Easterner Theodore Roosevelt ordered a suitable costume. "I now look like a regular cowboy dandy," he wrote a sister, "with all my equipment finished in the most expensive style."

A woman in the Dakota Bad Lands was engaged to make Roosevelt a fringed buckskin suit, including an intricately beaded shirt. From Tiffany's he purchased a silver-mounted Bowie knife, engraved silver spurs featuring his initials, and a silver belt buckle engraved with the head of a bear. His special Colt revolver was plated with silver and gold, engraved with handsome scrollwork, and the pearl grips sported his initials on one side and a buffalo head on the other. The outfit was completed with a "broad sombrero hat," horsehide chaps, tooled leather belt and holster, and alligator boots.

Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

Best-Dressed Gambler: Luke Short

A fastidious dresser, the deadly gambler-gunman draped his small frame (five-foot six-inch, 125 pounds) in fine tailored clothes. Short arrayed himself with a silk hat, double-breasted suit and matching overcoat, silver-tipped cane, gloves, and a diamond stickpin. Feeling that a gunbelt and holster were unseemly with his suits, Short had his right pants pocket cut extra long and lined with leather to hold his revolver.

The watch chain dangling across his vest saved his life in 1887, when Longhaired Jim Courtright jammed a six-gun into his middle during an altercation in Fort Worth, Texas. The cocked hammer caught on the gold chain, giving Short time to pull out his pistol and end Courtright's life.

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Best-Dressed Lawman:

Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

Bat Masterson

By the time Bat Masterson was elected sheriff of Ford County, Kansas, in 1877, he had shed the rough outfit of a buffalo hunter for more stylish garb. Bat became a lawman, professional gambler, prizefight promoter, and a New York City sportswriter, but always remained a natty dresser. He habitually wore a bowler, as well as a fashionable coat, vest and tie, and a heavy watch chain. Bat carried a walking stick, partially because of a pelvic wound suffered in an 1876 gunfight. In Dodge City the dapper sheriff found another use for his cane: to knock drunken troublemakers senseless.

Best-Dressed Cavalry Officer:

George Armstrong Custer

Author's Collection

The leader of the Seventh Cavalry was every inch a dashing cavalryman. As a young general during the Civil War, Custer designed himself a spectacular uniform of black velvet, festooned with swirls of gold braid on the sleeves, silver stars on his collar, and a scarlet neckerchief.

Stationed in the West after the war, Custer kept his thin, blond hair shoulder-length, and added frontier touches to his wardrobe. On the day that he was slain at the Little Bighorn, Custer wore a broad-brimmed plainsman's hat, blue flannel shirt, and buckskin breeches.

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Best-Dressed Outlaw: The Sundance Kid

Following a successful robbery, the Sundance Kid and the Wild Bunch enjoyed vacationing in such cities as Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Denver, where they bought fashionable clothes for roistering in saloons and bordellos. Harry Longabaugh (also known as the Sundance Kid, seated at the far left), Butch Cassidy, and three other gang members showed off their snappy attire in a group photo taken in Fort Worth. All five outlaws were wearing derbies and three-piece suits with watch chains. Longabaugh's shirt sleeves boasted big cuff studs.

Courtesy Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library

Courtesy Glenn Shirley

Best-Dressed Indian Chief: Quanah Parker

As a young man, Quanah Parker was a Comanche warrior, and after being confined to the reservation he became head chief of the tribe. Half-white and half-Comanche, Quanah shrewdly arranged lease agreements with Texas ranchers and deftly negotiated with federal officials on behalf of his people. Quanah was a popular celebrity at parades and various other occasions and he made numerous visits to Washington.

A strikingly handsome man, Quanah wore three-piece suits, jeweled tie pins, watch chains and fobs, and derby hats. But he always kept his hair long. For tribal occasions he donned buckskins and moccasins with elaborate beadwork. When he died he was buried in his best buckskin suit.

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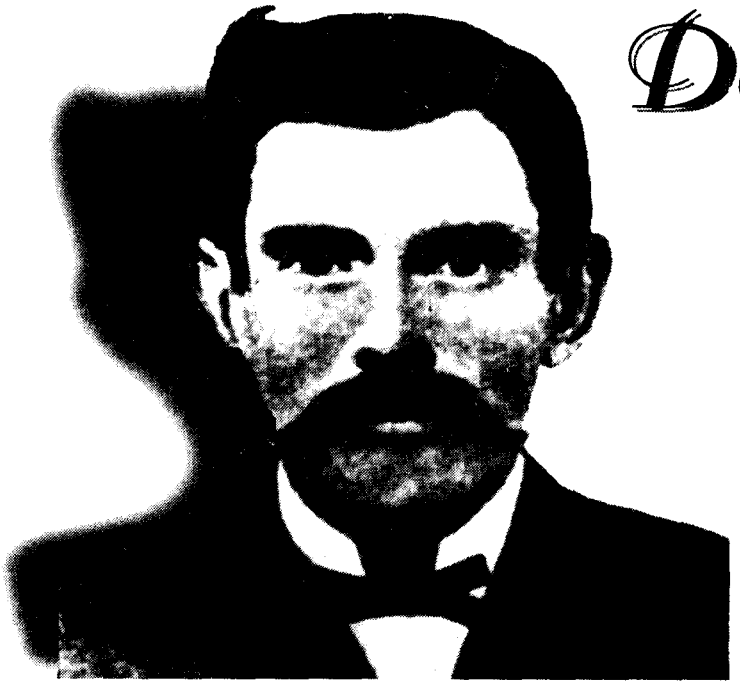
Best-Dressed Scout: Buffalo Bill Cody

William F. Cody, who popularized the Wild West Show, was an authentic westerner who variously worked as a Pony Express rider, buffalo hunter, trapper, prospector, teamster, army scout, stagecoach driver, hunting guide, and rancher. He knew the right look and he had a showman's flair for costume. His riding boots came above his knees, his wide-brimmed hat had a bold crease, his buckskin jackets were magnificent, and he set off his outfit with fringed gauntlets.

Author's Collection

Best-Dressed Dentist: Doc Holliday



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

A son of the South, John Henry Holliday turned up in the West as a dentist, then increasingly depended upon gambling for his livelihood. Both trades required a professional appearance, and observers remarked that "his clothes are custom-made" and that he was "always well-dressed." His suits were black, gray, or blue. Doc's accessories included a Colt revolver in a shoulder holster, another Colt on his hip, and a gambler's knife in his coat pocket.

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Best-Dressed Journalist: Sam Clemens

After toiling unsuccessfully as a Nevada prospector, Sam Clemens accepted a position with the Virginia City Daily Territorial Enterprise. Straight from the minefields, "I was a rusty-looking city editor...coatless, slouch hat, blue woolen shirt, pantaloons stuffed into boot tops, whiskered half down to the waist and the universal Navy revolver slung to my belt." Indeed, he soon learned that all reporters and printers carried revolvers. "But I secured a more Christian costume and discarded the revolver."

When he earned fame under the pseudonym Mark Twain, Clemens became famous for his three-piece white suits.

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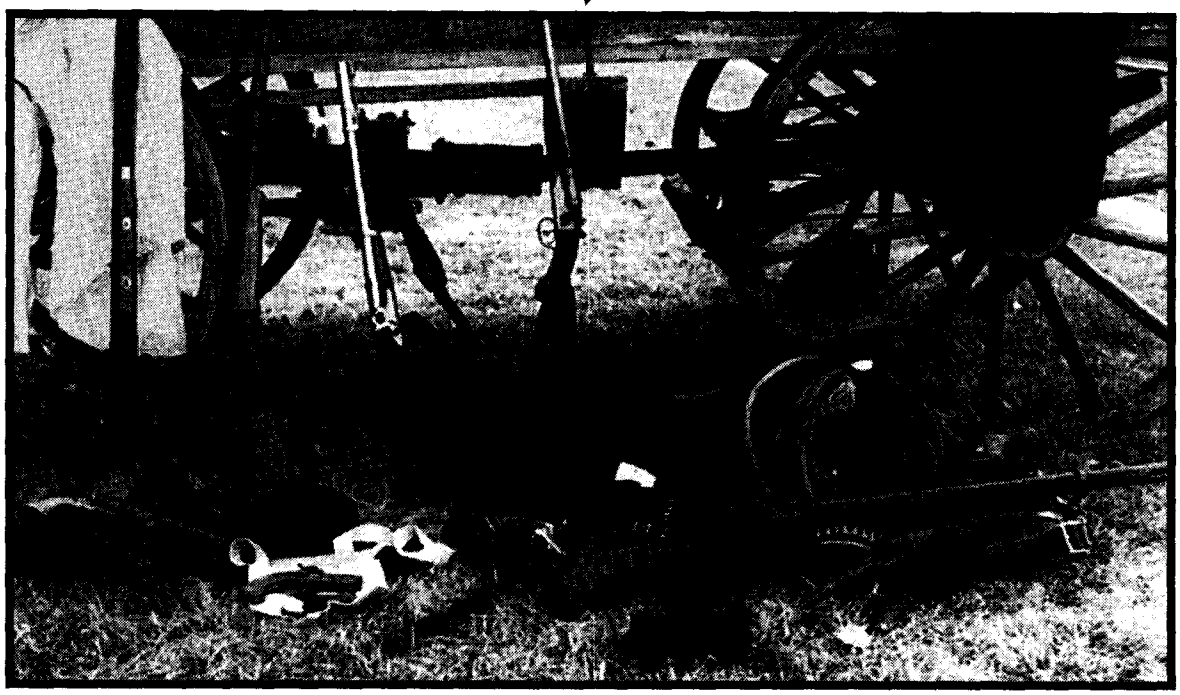

Author's Photo

Ten Great Guns of the Old West. Back Row (L to R): Replica Muzzleloading Plains Rifle, Original Sharps Buffalo Rifle, Replica 1841 Springfield "Mississippi" Carbine, Original Stevens 1887 Double Barrel Shotgun. Second Row: Original Model 1873 .44-40 Winchester. Bottom Row (L to R): Replica Colt 1851 Navy revolver, Replica Deringer and Replica Remington .41 Derringer, Replica Colt .44-40 and Original Colt .45 Peacemakers, Original Trapdoor Springfield .45-70, and Navy Arms Replica Smith & Wesson .45 Schofield Revolver. (Access courtesy of Dodge City Boot Hill Museum and Rick Melia Collection.)

10 Great Guns of the Old West

For the first hundred years of our nation's history, the gun was a common and necessary tool of self-defense and survival. For those men and women dwelling on the fringes of the frontier, the gun was a constant companion. The privately-owned firearm was considered such a vital element for the assertion of personal liberty that its inclusion into the text of the Bill of Rights of the United States continues to cause controversy and debate. Freedom is at least partially defined by many in American society as an individual's right to own and use firearms. America's fascination with firearms is in no small part due to the historical legacy of the often violent settlement of the West.

Naming ten great guns of the Old West seems easy on first consideration, and there are five or six standouts that automatically come to mind. Limiting the number to only ten becomes much more difficult and debatable. All of the guns mentioned in this article were innovative designs, popular in their time, and are available in replica form today.

We must consider those guns that captured the imagination of the modern American public, as well as provided excellent service in their day. The Colt .45 Peacemaker, Winchester 1873 lever action rifle, and Sharps buffalo rifle

By Randy D. Smith

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re and Sudden Death

are standouts in this category. They are depicted throughout our fictional accounts of the West in print and film. Any western film buff knows that heroes and villains alike turn to the Colt revolver and Winchester rifle when the action calls for shooting. It would be possible to write this article and mention nothing other than great Colt and Winchester designs. It seems that whenever a storyteller wants to demonstrate that the hero is a man of experience and superior shooting skill, he depicts the character using a Sharps rifle for those fantastic long-range shots.

The second consideration needs to be those firearms that were popular choices of the people of the time. Before the advent of self-contained ammunition, the premier firearm of the Far West was the muzzleloading Plains rifle. Mountaineers of the 1830s and 1840s, including Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, Joe Meek, Tom Tobin, or Little Bat Garnier, had a "Plains" rifle as their constant and most important companion. Mr. Deringer's little pocket handgun was so popular that his name became the symbol of that type of firearm. The Colt Navy percussion revolver is so commonly mentioned in journals and accounts of the West that a "pair of Navies" has only one meaning. Literally everyone who was serious about settling a home and feeding his family on the frontier owned a double barreled shotgun. There are many of us who will argue that this was truly "The Gun That Won the West."

Third, there are those guns that played a critical part in history because the military chose them for frontier service. These are the guns that made history in the hands of soldiers and were still in use long after more advanced firearms challenged them. In part, because of their rugged dependability and accuracy, as was the case of the Model 1841 "Mississippi" muzzleloader, or because the government refused to issue anything more advanced to frontier troops, as was the case of the Trapdoor Springfield rifle. Another example is the Smith & Wesson "Schofield" revolver. If a soldier was fortunate enough to be issued a Schofield revolver, he had the most advanced and finely crafted military handgun of his day.

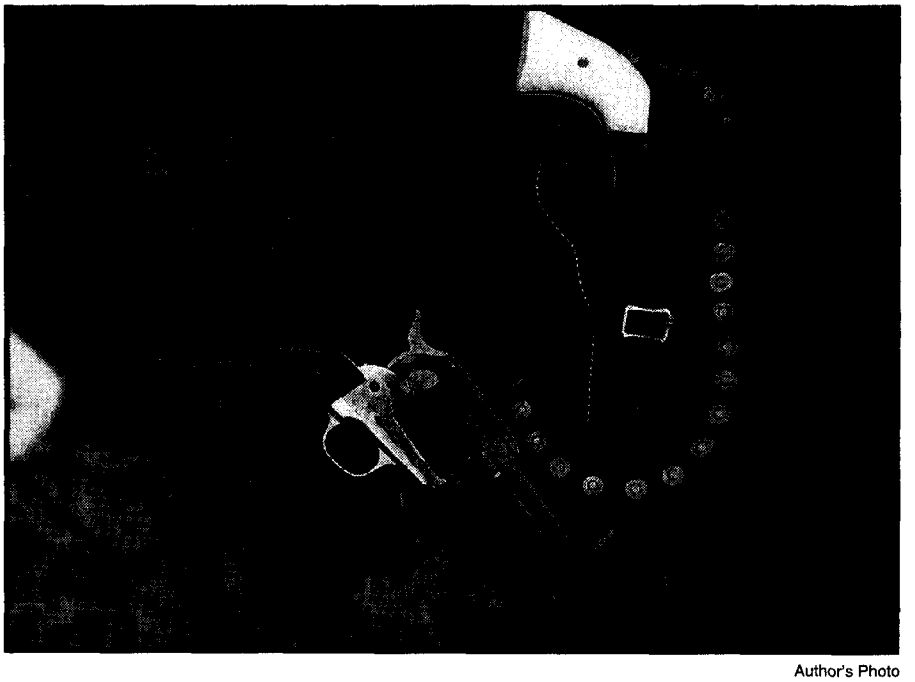
Colt .45 Peacemaker

Without a doubt, the single most famous firearm of the Old West is the .45 caliber, single action, six-shot Colt revolver. It is the gun that is most easily recognized as being a Colt by the general public. The Peacemaker was the first cartridge pistol produced by the Colt Company.

It was first officially known as the New Model Army Metallic Cartridge Revolving Pistol, and later renamed Single Action Army Revolver. It was the culmination of a long list of Colt percussion, single action revolver designs dating back almost forty years.

The Colt single-action revolver was forty-five caliber, using self-contained center-fire ammunition. Up to forty grains of black powder could be packed behind a 235-grain lead bullet. Most loadings, including the official government cartridge, used twenty-eight grains of black powder, almost identical to the typical .44 caliber percussion revolver of the Civil War.

The Single Action Army Revolver was initially produced in 1871, and first reached general service in 1873. The first order of 8,000 went to the Army and was not generally available to civilians until 1874. It was two more years before large numbers were available to the public. The Cavalry Model had a barrel length of 7.5 inches, the Artillery Model had a barrel length of 5.5 inches, and a 4.75 inch barrel was made for civilian use. The Peacemaker was quickly tooled to use .44-40 (.44 caliber, 40 grains of black powder) cartridges to match the



Author's Photo

Replica Colt .44 Peacemaker (author) and original Spanish copy of a .45 Colt Peacemaker (Rick Melia Collection).

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enormously popular 1873 Winchester rifle. (Cartridges of any configuration were limited on the frontier.) It was a stroke of marketing genius as most individuals purchased the rifle first, and later the revolver. Matching expensive ammunition in both was appealing to the common man as he could buy one box instead of two and did not need to worry about mixing his ammunition in a dangerous situation.

The Peacemaker was a nearly perfect "frontier" firearm. At $17 for a standard model, it was affordable for anyone with an income who wanted to own a handgun. Because it was not an especially finely crafted weapon, it was able to function dependably in harsh environmental conditions in spite of neglect by its user. It could stand up to frequent or continual carry and still function upon demand. In .44-40 or .45 caliber, it was powerful enough to kill almost anything on the North American continent at close range, and it was superbly balanced for the hand. Before the company ended its production of this revolver in 1941, almost 358,000 were manufactured. With the rise in popularity of television westerns in the 1950s, Colt and a number of foreign and domestic manufacturers began marketing guns of similar, if not identical, design. Today there are at least one million revolvers based upon the Peacemaker design worldwide.

1851 Navy Colt

Before there was the Peacemaker, the most noted revolver of the West was the 1851 Colt Navy Percussion single action. Although it did not sell in the numbers of its smaller sister model, the .31 caliber 1849 Pocket Pistol, it was the most common holster revolver of the frontier.

A percussion revolver is loaded from the front of the cylinder, usually using a detachable lever type ramrod mounted underneath the barrel. Powder and bullet are loaded from the front, and a small metal priming charge called a percussion cap is mounted on the percussion nipple to the rear. The cylinder is rotated, and the chamber is aligned with the barrel by the action of cocking the hammer. The Colt Navy was a six-shot, .36 caliber, roughly the equivalent in power to the modern .38 Special when loaded with twenty-five grains of black powder and a round lead ball or bullet. It was called Navy because of a scene engraved upon the cylinder depicting a Texas Navy encounter. As time progressed, the term "Navy" came to be associated with .36 caliber handguns.

The Navy weighed two pounds, ten ounces, a great improvement upon its much bulkier predecessors because of advances in metallurgy. Earlier revolvers of its power normally weighed almost twice as much. The gun contained an improvement in the form of a cylinder slot which, in conjunction with a spur or the hammer, secured the cylinder during discharge, making the operation of the revolver more positive. It also had safety pins inserted in the rear of the cylinder, which added more efficiently to the arm. It was the Navy's configuration of balance and dependability that had significant effects upon the design of the Colt Peacemaker. When self-contained ammunition became commonly available, many Colt Navies were converted to .38 caliber cartridge use, by boring out the percussion nipples and changing the hammer face to strike the center of brass cartridge primers.

The gun was discontinued in 1876 but was still common on the frontier well into the 1890s, many still in original percussion design. Poorly paid cowboys, in particular, found the older, cheaper Colt Navy to be effective enough for trail use. To this day, six shots fired at close range make for a hell of a gunfight. The 1851 Colt can still muster to that situation.

1873 Winchester

If a man on the frontier had to purchase only one firearm to fill all his needs, and still defend himself at long range, his first choice was probably a Winchester rifle. Although various models of the Winchester dominated frontier rifle sales throughout the later half of the nineteenth and first two decades of the twentieth centuries, I have chosen the Model 1873 as the primary example. Built from 1873 until 1924, the 1873 Winchester was a substantial improvement over earlier Henry and Model 1866 versions. It had the same general outline as the earlier models, except that it was designed for centerfire ammunition, primarily the .44-40. The action was all steel instead of the brass frame in the 1866 and Henry styles. Overall length of the original 1873 was forty-three inches with a twenty-four-inch octagon barrel and a weight of 8.5 pounds. The gun held fourteen shots, with one in the chamber. Winchester "73's" were also produced in half-octagon and round barrels at a slightly lower price. Most popular calibers were .44-40, .38-40, and .32-20. The carbine version has a twenty-inch barrel with a capacity of twelve shots, and weighed a pound less than the rifle. Records indicate that 720,610 were made, twice as many as the Peacemaker, with almost twenty years less manufacturing run.

"The Winchester rifle was absolutely reliable and could not be put out of operation with any normal handling. It would stand freezing temperatures, mud, dust, rain, snow, or other problems which the hunter and the pioneer Westerner had to suffer," according to Philip Sharpe in his 1938 book, *The Rifle in America.*

It was also extremely user friendly, in spite of a horrid stock design. If a man could only own one gun, he chose a rifle because of range and accuracy advantages. The Winchester carbine was also of a reasonably small weight and configuration to do just fine for short range encounters.

Even as recently as today, experts such as noted writer Jeff Cooper make strong arguments for the Model '94 Winchester carbine as a contender for the perfect home defense weapon, especially if the defender does not have the opportunity to become proficient with a handgun. It seems that we are redis-

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Author's Photo

Original .45-70 Trapdoor Springfield Infantry Rifle (Dodge City Boot Hill Museum) and Replica .45 Smith & Wesson Schofield (Rick Melia Collection).

covering a fact about Winchesters that was widely known in the Old West.

Plains Rifle

Before the advent of self-contained ammunition, guns were generally muzzleloaders, that is, powder and bullet were rammed down the barrel from the muzzle end with a ramrod. The load was then ignited with a flintlock powder charge or later percussion cap. The so-called Plains (or perhaps more romantic "Hawken") Rifle was the first gun to be solely the product of demands of the Western Plains and Mountain Frontier, generally in use from 1820 to 1875. It was heavy, often weighing in at twelve to fourteen pounds, to handle massive powder charges, often as much as 200 grains, relatively short for easy use from the back of a horse, and of .50 or larger caliber to deal with bison, grizzly bear, and Indian fighting at long range.

Guns of this time were the products of small gun shops rather than major manufacturing giants, as was typical from the 1850s onward. William and Jake Hawken of St. Louis, Missouri, Edward K. Tryon, Horace Dimick, John P. Gemmer, or the partnership of Golcher & Butler produced excellent examples of this style of rifle. A standard Hawken sold for $22 to $27 and Tyron was still listing them in the 1870s for $7.50. These guns were generally side hammer, half-stock muzzleloading single shots, usually equipped with a double or "set" trigger configuration. The back trigger "set" made the front trigger so that it dropped the hammer at the slightest touch. The gun reached the apex of its design in the 1840s. In 1846, near Fort Laramie, Wyoming, historian Francis Parkman writes of using a fifteen-pound percussion model to make a one-shot antelope kill at 204 yards. He states that his guide, Henry Chattilion, killed two buffalo with one shot apiece at over 150 yards, with a third buffalo at about 300 yards.

Frontiersmen of this time used Plains Rifles to keep the enemy at a distance, allowing them time to reload or retreat to make a stand from another location. The gun's heavy weight allowed the targeting to be highly stable for long-range shooting. A slow rifling twist allowed heavy projectiles to be launched accurately from various powder charges. In other words, the gun was not fussy about loading and was rugged enough to be depended upon in adverse conditions. Even after the advent of self-contained ammunition, Plains Rifles remained in use because of their dependability and reasonable cost. Fine California muzzleloading sporting rifles of the 1870s and 1880s were extensions of Plains Rifle design.

Sharps "Old Reliable"

Before Winchester or any manufacturer of repeating rifles developed a mechanism that could shoot charges to match the performance of the Plains Rifle, men turned to the large caliber, single-shot cartridge rifle. The Sharps is the most famous of this configuration. These were the buffalo guns of the great post-Civil War hide market days.

Christian Sharps was issued ten patents in 1848 for a falling block, breech-loading mechanism. Sharps rifles were all single-shot, which operated by throwing forward the trigger guard, sliding a block at the rear of the barrel downward, and uncovering the breech. Closing the action was accomplished by returning the trigger guard to its place. The gun was then cocked and primed with a percussion cap. After the Civil War, a cartridge was placed in the breech when the block was dropped, and no percussion cap was used. What made the Sharps mechanism so good was that the block, when locked in place, was almost indestructible and allowed for massive charges to be placed in the bore and fired with very little gas leakage.

The Sharps BL Sporting Rifle was introduced in 1868, using the .40-50 Sharps bottleneck and the .40-70 Sharps bottleneck cartridge. Shortly afterward, .44-77 and .50-70 cartridge-firing models were introduced. By 1874, the Sharps rifle was at its zenith of production. Most were of .45 caliber with thirty-inch barrels, weighing nine to twelve pounds. However, a Sharps rifle could be ordered in almost any configuration a man could imagine. Generally the guns listed for anywhere from $25 to $125, depending upon options and calibers. Special bison hunting configurations often weighed as much as sixteen pounds and would shoot loads up to the massive .45-77-420 cartridge. Buffalo kills at 900 yards were recorded, such guns often utilizing expensive German 10X to 20X optical scopes.

A single-shot cartridge rifle on

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the open plains is highly effective and works similarly to the muzzle-loading Plains Rifle at keeping danger at bay, except that it will shoot almost fifteen times as many rounds in a minute's time. Buffalo hunters in substantial numbers were formidable foes to the Indian, and such rifles gave them a sense of invincibility. They were the Plains Indians' most hated enemy during the 1870s and 1880s. Men who made their living at long-range shooting developed skills that almost defy imagination today, and gave the Sharps rifle a reputation of mythical effectiveness.

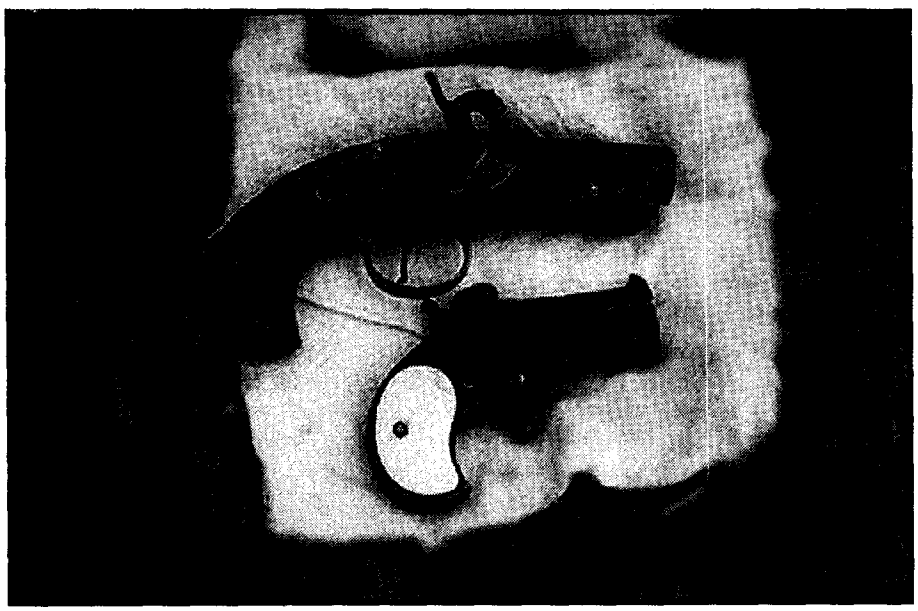
Once the hide markets collapsed and the Winchester 1876 and Marlin lever actions were introduced in .45-70 caliber, the Sharps rifle company quickly passed into history. For a brief time, however, it was generally conceded to be the finest rifle in the world, and its formidable reputation lasts to this day.

Deringer

The "Gun that Killed Lincoln" was developed in 1825 as a heavy-caliber, short-barreled, single shot, muzzleloading percussion pistol by a young man named Henry Deringer, Jr., from a prominent Philadelphia gun-making family. It was the first universally popular "pocket" pistol, and became so famous that the name of the manufacturer became a class of gun unto itself.

The Deringer was usually manufactured, sold, and carried in matched pairs of .33 to .50 caliber, and did not achieve mass marketing status until the late 1840s. Most characteristic of Deringer pistols were black walnut grips with "bird's-head" butts, back-action percussion locks, and short barrels. Barrel lengths ranged from one half-inch to a hefty four inches. What made the guns stand out was the exceptional craftsmanship that went into each pair. A man carrying a pair of Deringers in the Mississippi riverboat games of chance, on the streets of Gold Rush California, or in the tough back alleys of New York or Kansas City had little to fear from intimidation.

No one knows for certain how many of this class of gun Deringer manufactured, but there were thousands of imitations, some good, some not so good. Many companies subtly changed the spelling of their guns to Derringer to skirt litigation. Oddly, it is not the classic Deringer that is most commonly depicted in western films, but the Remington First Model, Double-barrel Derringer .41 caliber rimfire, with two superposed round, three-inch barrels. The Remington model is most commonly identified as a "Derringer" by the majority of the public.



Author's Photo

Replica .45 Deringer (author) and Replica Remington .41 Derringer (Rick Melia Collection).

W.W. Greener Double Barreled Shotgun

From men pulling night watch on Santa Fe Trail caravans, to stagecoach guards sitting up front next to the driver, to Doc Holliday packing his "street howitzer" on the way to the O.K. Corral, the scattergun is another of the classic western gun images. The most recognizable brand of literally hundreds of offerings on the market is the W.W. Greener, but it represented only a small fraction of sales. Classic western double barrels ranged in price in 1897, for instance, from a serviceable Sears, Roebuck for $5.35, to a Greener for $187.50. A fancy English double could cost many times that amount, but for the most part it was the cheaper models that dominated the market.

Greener shotguns became popular for a number of breakthrough patents. Greeners were noted for a strong cross-bolt system and a unique single trigger and side safety. In 1876, Greener constructed a hammerless side-by-side breechloader that won a recognition award at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. In the United States, it was generally given superior status over all but the finest custom fowlers. If a man wanted to defend himself, feed his family, force his will upon others, or convince a crowd that "it just isn't worth it," he could choose no better or more reasonably priced firearm than the shotgun. Few men were brave, or foolish, enough to attempt to back down a determined foe pointing a pair of twelve-gauge smoothbores at him. A man holding a Greener could be supremely confident in his ability to get the job done.

Model 1841

Making my final three choices was not as easy as the others. I settled upon a class of guns that is often overlooked, but saw extensive duty in confrontations throughout the West, the military service wea-

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pons. The first of these is my last choice for the top ten, but during a twenty-year period, it was considered one of the finest military arms in the world and does not get the credit that it rightfully deserves. The Model 1841 Mississippi, or "Jaeger," was the first percussion caplock rifle issued to United States troops. It earned such a fine reputation in the Mexican War in the hands of Jeff Davis' Mississippi regulars that it became greatly prized throughout the West. The guns were issued to immigrants, members of the Mormon Battalion, and station attendants of the Pony Express, and rebored from .54 to .58 caliber for issue during the Civil War by both Union and Confederacy. It is commonly thought to be one of the best and sturdiest caplock rifles to see service for the government.

I often hunt with a replica .58 caliber carbine version of the Model 1841 and can attest that it remains one of the best balanced, most dependable, and hardest hitting muzzleloaders that I have ever owned.

Author's Photo

Original Stevens Model 1887, twelve-gauge, double barrel shotgun (Dodge City Boot Hill Museum).

"Trapdoor" Springfield

Oftentimes, I read others making a blistering case against the Springfield Model 1873. They charge the government with short sighted and even miserly disregard for the troops that were issued such an obsolete, slow shooting, oddball. In truth, the gun wasn't a superior design, but it was a nearly perfect choice for poorly-trained troops of the West. Its .45-70 cartridge configuration was a fearsome presence on the battlefield.

The gun was the outgrowth of the government's many experiments with systems to convert thousands of Civil War rifled muskets for a much smaller post-war army. The chosen system consisted of a hinged breech atop the rear of the barrel, fastened by a latch, a design of E.S. Allin of Springfield Armory. Some of the early .50-70 Springfields were used effectively by soldiers from Fort Phil Kearny at the Wagon Box fight in Montana. Bill Cody used a .50-70 he called "Lucretia Borgia" when he was employed to furnish meat for workers on the Kansas Pacific Railroad.

After going through several less than impressive configurations, the .45-70 cartridge made the Trapdoor Springfield a service weapon that would drop an adversary at 300 yards, and shoot fifteen times as fast as a muzzleloading Civil War vintage musket. In the hands of disciplined troops, the Trapdoor Springfield was highly effective and a solid military arm from the Battle of the Washita to San Juan Hill in Cuba.

Smith & Wesson Schofield

One of the finest revolvers to see military service in the West was the Smith & Wesson Army Revolver, Model 1875, Schofield Patent, better known as the Smith & Wesson Schofield. It was a single-action, six-shot .45 caliber that used the Smith & Wesson .45 Government (now known as the .45 Schofield) cartridge. It was a shorter, less powerful round than what the .45 Colt Army would take but, because of distribution problems, became the standard revolver round of the United States Army because it could be used effectively in both revolvers.

The Schofield was a large revolver, approximately 13.5 inches long and weighing over two pounds. Like most Smith & Wessons of the period, it was a top break, tip-up revolver that hinged in front of the cylinder and ejected empty cartridges rather than having to poke them out one at a time like the Colt Army. The Schofield patent allowed a cavalry soldier to trip a latch and dump the empty rounds with one hand, very important to a man on horseback. The gun was also more finely crafted and accurate than the Colt. It cost half-again as much as a Peacemaker, and therefore was not a common handgun in frontier civilian hands. Approximately 9,000 Schofields were delivered to the army and many were still in service after World War I.

A cut-down model with a five-inch barrel (rather than military seven inches), was used by Wells, Fargo. Unusual U.S. stampings on Smith & Wesson Wells, Fargo models have proven a mystery as to whether they were military surplus, or simply sold with the markings on them. It seems unlikely that Wells, Fargo would go to the expense to have surplus weapons cut down. The Smith & Wesson Schofield ranks as one of, if not the best crafted American handgun of the nineteenth century.

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A Questionable Fight

Author's Collection

This cartoon of Wyatt Earp robbing Fitzsimmons at gunpoint and handing the $10,000 proceeds to Sharkey left no doubts as to the editorial view of the fight in the December 12, 1896, *San Francisco Call.*

THE "BAD MAN" REFEREE

In San Francisco

By Harold L. Edwards

During the late evening of December 2, 1896, heavyweight boxers Bob Fitzsimmons and Tom Sharkey fought a scheduled bout in San Francisco, California. Both men were championship contenders, and much was at stake for each of them. The bout was energetically fought. However, in the eighth round the referee stopped the contest by declaring Sharkey the winner, claiming that Fitzsimmons had struck his opponent with a foul low blow. There were immediate cries from the press and the spectators that the fight had been rigged and the outcome was prearranged for Fitzsimmons to lose, that, in fact, Fitzsimmons had not fouled his opponent.

While public feelings over the fight were intense at the time, the controversy surrounding the fight would have lessened with the passage of time had the referee of the bout not been Wyatt Earp, famous frontier-era peace officer and local celebrity. As a result, the Fitzsimmons-Sharkey fight controversy has been active to this day, more as a part of the Wyatt Earp legend than as an occurrence in the history of American boxing.

During the 1890s, athletic contests were popular entertainment for Americans, especially in the metropolitan areas where gate money and wagers were plentiful. Although other sporting events were well attended, boxing was especially attractive and athletic clubs regularly sponsored them. Although the fistic sport was billed as "boxing," more often the bouts were professional prizefights, conducted under simple rules when compared with modern standards. Often the purse was "winner take all," and big money was to be gained by side bets. Since the referees often had the sole power of declaring the winners of the contests, it was essential for fairness that they have reputations for honesty and credibility,

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which sometimes wasn't the case.

The Bob Fitzsimmons-Tom Sharkey fight took place in the Mechanics Pavilion. Both contestants were popular and considered world-class boxers. Although Fitzsimmons was better known than his opponent, Sharkey was almost regarded as the hometown boy. Fitzsimmons was ten years older than Sharkey, and he had been put to the test many times. He was a veteran boxer who over a long career had whipped some notable opponents. Born in Cornwall, England, in 1862, Fitzsimmons had migrated to New Zealand where he became a blacksmith and later a professional fighter. San Franciscans eagerly awaited the arrival of "Ruby Robert," so called because of his ruddy complexion.

Tom Sharkey was born in Dim Dolk, Ireland, in 1872. It isn't certain when he arrived in the United States, but he eventually entered American service as a seaman in the United States Navy. He boxed his way to a navy championship before putting his talents as a boxer to professional use. Sharkey had also confronted some big names in the sport. He stayed eight rounds with Joe Choynski, a popular contender from San Francisco. He had also boxed San Francisco's heavyweight champion James Corbett, known as "Gentleman Jim," to a four-round draw. Even though the young Sharkey had earned a slot in the top ranks, his pending bout with Fitzsimmons was most important if he was to challenge the champion.

All of the arrangements surrounding the fight, except the selection of the referee, were made weeks in advance. San Francisco newspapers heralded the approaching event on their prime pages. There were large headlines, long columns, and abundant illustrations advising sports fans of the contestants' ring prowess, physical attributes, personal and professional histories. They quoted the combatants' statements about their opponents and the coming fight. The ballyhoo from the fighters' managers and the fight promoters was reported in detail, and the newspapers openly speculated on the fight's outcome. The match was promoted relentlessly. By the day the contest was to take place the public was in a state of high excitement and the bout was a guaranteed sellout.

However, as the time for the fight drew near the referee for the match still had not been selected. During negotiations, neither side would agree to the suggestions of the other. The fight contract stipulated that if the contestants could not agree on who should be the referee, the National Athletic Club, under whose auspices the fight was sponsored, would make the selection. The selection was stalled when one of the fight promoters, Andrew "Long Green" Lawrence, recommended Wyatt Earp for the job. According to the *San Francisco Morning Call*, Earp was being employed by Lawrence as a bodyguard, which could raise the question of a conflict of interest. National Athletic Club Manager J.D. Gibbs, however, accepted Lawrence's suggestion and appointed Earp as referee. Gibbs said he had met Earp only once, but felt his reputation as a clear-headed, cool person of impeccable standards would be fair to both fighters. Further, Gibbs said that Earp had refereed about thirty fights and had the experience necessary for the position. The club's only interest was to give Fitzsimmons and Sharkey an equal chance in the ring, and for that reason the club wanted a just and able referee for the contest.

In 1896, Wyatt Earp was an aging but active member of the sporting world. He was well-known in California, but his reputation was controversial. He was believed by some to have been a dedicated lawman during the turbulent frontier era who brought honest law and order to the wild Kansas trail towns and to Tombstone, Arizona. His supporters felt he was a man of high personal ethics, integrity, and honesty and conducted himself by those standards throughout his entire adult life. Others saw him quite dif-

Author's Collection

Heavyweight boxing contender Bob Fitzsimmons, as portrayed in the San Francisco *Chronicle* of December 3, 1896.

Author's Collection

Referee Wyatt Earp, as portrayed in the San Francisco *Chronicle* of December 3, 1896.

Author's Collection

Heavyweight boxing contender Thomas Sharkey, as portrayed in the San Francisco *Chronicle* of December 3, 1896.

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ferently. They believed he was a frontier fringe character who was a sometimes corrupt peace officer, unethical gambler, pimp, confidence man, and gunfighter whose personal standards were at best questionable. While it was apparent to his detractors that he didn't pursue these perceived activities in his later life, they still felt he was a fringe character of the sporting world and not to be trusted. However, he was appointed referee and the bout went ahead as scheduled.

At 10:05 PM Fitzsimmons and his entourage wound their way through the throngs of spectators who gathered in the aisles. He was cheered enthusiastically when he climbed into the ring. The fighter nodded to some nearby acquaintances and sat on a stool in his corner. He was attended by his manager, Martin Julian, and Daniel Hickey and Jack Steizner. Fitzsimmons appeared calm, confident, and cheerful.

A few minutes later Sharkey and his group made their way down the aisle and into the ring. The popular contender received a greater ovation from the crowd than did Fitzsimmons, and it was apparent that he was the favorite. Although appearing somewhat nervous, Sharkey acknowledged the cheers and encouragement of his supporters. He was attended by his manager, Daniel Lynch, who was aided by Daniel Needham, George Allen, and Billy Smith.

After Sharkey had been seated for a moment, Fitzsimmons walked across the ring to Sharkey's corner. He introduced himself to Sharkey and said he hoped the best man would win. He and Sharkey shook hands and Fitzsimmons returned to his corner.

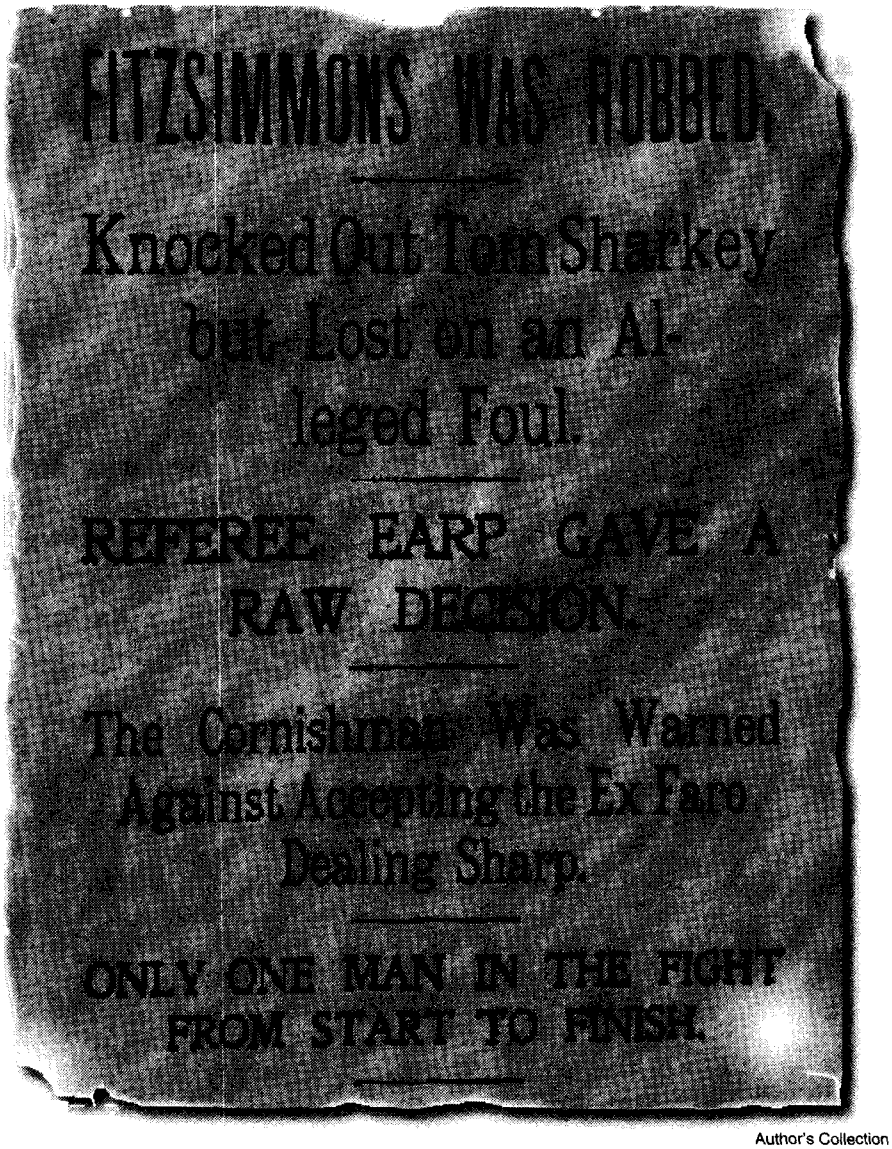
Announcer Billy Jordan, who was already in the ring, went to the ropes and called loudly for Wyatt Earp. Adding to the pre-fight tension, Jordan called for Earp several more times before the referee entered the ring. Jordan announced that Wyatt Earp had been selected as referee. The news was met with an equal chorus of cheers and hisses.

Jordan announced that Martin Julian had refused to accept the referee, due to some talk of Earp being crooked. At this announcement, Fitzsimmons smiled as the spectators loudly cheered and hissed.

After a brief conference with club officials, Julian walked to the ropes and announced to the crowd that Sharkey's manager, the club officials, and he had met and tried to select a referee. According to Julian, he suggested half of a dozen men, among them Hiram Cook, a noted legitimate referee. Lynch had objected to all of them, and, finally, the club selected Earp. This statement was met with more cheers and hisses. The crowd seemed to be enjoying the drama. Julian told the crowd that when he and Fitzsimmons heard Wyatt Earp had been selected as referee, the appointment was initially agreeable. Since then, several sporting men from San Francisco had come to them and said that the referee was crooked, that the outcome of the fight was predetermined.

Sharkey's manager then addressed the crowd. He reported that he and Fitzsimmons' representative met in conjunction with the officers of the club and had come to an agreement. He announced that Sharkey had lived up to every article he agreed to. He was willing and ready to fight, with the referee selected by the club. The crowd roared its approval.

Announcer Jordan then advised the spectators that Fitzsimmons'


FITZSIMMONS WAS ROBBED.

Knocked Out Tom Sharkey but Lost on an Alleged Foul.

REFEREE EARP GAVE A RAW DECISION.

The Cornishman Was Warned Against Accepting the Ex Faro Dealing Sharp.

ONLY ONE MAN IN THE FIGHT FROM START TO FINISH.

Author's Collection

The controversial decision by Referee Wyatt Earp made headlines in the December 3, 1896, edition of the *San Francisco Call.*

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manager was willing to select any referee in the house. The crowd answered the challenge by shouting, "Wyatt Earp!" While excited and tense, the spectators were still good-natured, jovial, and enjoying the show. One of them shouted an inside joke that made the crowd laugh: "Get Judge Campbell!" At this point, Fitzsimmons stood and raised his hand for attention. When the crowd quieted, he said he had compromised in all of his fights and he would do the same in that one. After the cheers from the spectators subsided, Fitzsimmons said that Sharkey would have to do one thing, and that was to take the bandages off of his hands. Fitzsimmons had none on his. The spectators cheered and shouted: "Take them off, Sharkey." Billy Jordan then announced that Fitzsimmons accepted Earp as referee.

Sometime during all of this, San Francisco Police Captain Charles Wittman noticed a bulge under Wyatt Earp's coat. He knew it was a concealed weapon. Wittman entered the ring and ordered the referee to surrender the pistol, which Earp handed to him without resistance.

The boxing gloves were handed into the ring by an official, and Fitzsimmons' gloves were laced onto his hands while Sharkey removed the bandages from his hands. Referee Earp took his coat off. Sharkey gargled some water and Fitzsimmons rubbed the soles of his shoes in the resin box as Billy Jordan announced: "This will be a ten round contest, and at the end of ten rounds the man having the best of the contest will be awarded the certified check for $10,000, which is now in the referee's hands." Earp handed the announcer the check, who waved it over his head for the crowd to see. Jordan returned the check to Earp and continued: "The men have agreed in a clinch to break away square and fair and do no fighting." The ring was cleared for action.

Billy Jordan then announced Sharkey as the pride of the American Navy and the champion of the Pacific Coast. Sharkey was roundly cheered. Jordan followed by announcing Fitzsimmons as the champion of the world. Fitzsimmons was cheered, although not as lustily as Sharkey had been. The contestants returned to their corners, and at 10:46 PM the bell sounded to start the first round.

For seven rounds, the classical boxer, Bob Fitzsimmons, out-classed and out-boxed Sharkey. Both men threw punches. Some landed lightly, others were blocked or missed. Some of them connected with jarring effect. The battlers clinched often. Near the end of the first round, Fitzsimmons knocked Sharkey to the canvas with either a right-hand punch to the arm or to the jaw. (The *Call* reported it was to the jaw; the *Chronicle* said it was to the arm.) Sharkey got quickly to his feet as the bell rang, ending the round.

Rounds three and four were hard-fought with no knock-down punches. During round four, Sharkey appeared more aggressive and stronger than he had in the previous rounds. He knocked "Ruby Robert" down with a hard punch to the jaw. Fitzsimmons regained his feet immediately and carried the fight to Sharkey, landing blows with both hands, drawing blood from over Sharkey's eye.

The fifth round wasn't noteworthy except that Sharkey grabbed Fitzsimmons by the leg and lifted him off of the floor. He let Fitzsimmons drop and the fighters went on throwing punches. The next two rounds evolved with no serious blows landed by either man. By the end of the seventh round, both men appeared to be tiring.

The *Call* reported that Sharkey was "very slow to come up" at the beginning of the eighth round. According to the article, Fitzsimmons was "very chipper and dancing around." The *Chronicle*, however, stated that Sharkey "came up very fresh and the battle was resumed as vigorously as at the early stages of the game and exactly on the same lines."

Suddenly, Fitzsimmons struck Sharkey two blows, which knocked the sailor to the mat. Fitzsimmons had delivered a hard blow to Sharkey's body and then an uppercut to the chin. Sharkey tried to get to his feet but rolled over, clutching his groin. Immediately, Referee Earp declared Sharkey the winner of the fight as a result of a foul low blow, delivered by Fitzsimmons. Most of the reporters and spectators saw Fitzsimmon's punch to Sharkey's chin, but not many saw the punch to the body. It had all happened so suddenly that the spectators were puzzled and bewildered by the referee's decision.

When the crowd recovered from its shock, individuals began shouting that the fight was fixed and that Fitzsimmons had been robbed. Instantly, Sharkey was no longer the favorite. While Sharkey was assisted to his corner by his seconds, a number of police officers entered the ring. The crowd became unruly, almost to the point of becoming a mob. Sharkey was paid the check, and the referee left the ring and the pavilion quickly and quietly. Eventually, the spectators left the arena without further trouble, but the fight wasn't ended. It was still to be fought in the press and the court.

As expected, Fitzsimmons claimed to have been robbed. He told newspaper reporters that he had never fought cleaner and had been cheated out of the winner's purse. The press agreed with him and the public supported him.

In the meantime, Sharkey reposed in his hotel room, attended by his physician. He supposedly suffered injury from the low blow. In a statement to the press, Sharkey said: "All I am sorry for is that the foul blow was delivered in that round because I had Fitzsimmons going and would surely have whipped him in the next round," a sentiment not held by those who viewed the fight. Sharkey continued, "He fouled me frequently and I thought the referee would give the fight against Fitz before the eighth round," also a view not held by the fight's spectators.

Wyatt Earp dropped by Sharkey's

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hotel to see how the battered fighter was doing. Interestingly, he was asked by newspaper reporters how the alleged foul blow was delivered, as, apparently, no one had seen it. He responded, "When Sharkey ducked to avoid a right-hand cross, Fitzsimmons stooped as low as he could and hooked him with a left in the groin. Tom keeled over, and I immediately gave the fight against Fitzsimmons as I considered it a most palpable foul." Earp further stated that he didn't know Sharkey before the night of the fight, but that he had been introduced to Fitzsimmons some years before by Bat Masterson. Earp went on to say, "I am sure that Masterson lost considerable money on the result, but I cannot help that."

Wyatt Earp told the reporters that he had almost disqualified Fitzsimmons in the fight when he gashed Sharkey's eye "with a backhanded elbow." When he was asked about Sharkey's fouls, such as lifting Fitzsimmons off the ring floor in the fifth round, Earp replied: "Those fouls were unintentional and Sharkey meant nothing by them. I do not notice any unintentional fouls, but of the two men, Fitzsimmons certainly committed the most palpable fouls and that is why I decided in favor of Sharkey." Earp's supporters accepted his statements, but, in general, the press and the public held an opposite view, believing Earp had described a foul blow that never occurred.

At the request of Martin Julian, the National Athletic Club asked the Anglo-California Bank to stop payment on Sharkey's certified check. Later that day, Daniel Lynch and Wyatt Earp appeared at the bank with the check for payment. They were advised that the check would not be cashed pending court action on the matter.

The National Athletic Club made a public statement. "We withheld payment of the check because of the expressions of dissatisfaction on the part of many of the audience. Some claimed that the referee was a party to a job to cheat Fitzsimmons. In order that Fitzsimmons and his backers might have every opportunity to institute the legal proceedings they have threatened after the contest we, as the directors of the National Athletic Club, requested the Anglo-California Bank to withhold payment of the check for the time being." This action applied only to the purse. The bets on the fight were still paid.

Martin Julian filed for a court injunction against payment of the purse to Sharkey in the San Francisco County Superior Court on November 3, 1896. The court ordered a temporary injunction against paying the purse pending a hearing on the matter.

WYATT EARP TOLD THE REPORTERS THAT HE HAD ALMOST DISQUALIFIED FITZSIMMONS IN THE FIGHT WHEN HE GASHED SHARKEY'S EYE "WITH A BACKHANDED ELBOW."

In the meantime, in preparation for the hearing, the National Athletic Club's manager, J.J. Groom, advised reporters that he was having a team of reputable physicians examine the injured Sharkey, who at the moment was confined to his bed in the Windsor Hotel. It was hoped that their findings would clear the club of any suspicion. The examination was held in Sharkey's hotel room at 4:30 that afternoon.

Doctors Joseph Pescia, J.S. Barrett, T.A. Rottanzi, Charles Shilling, Winslow Anderson, and D.D. Lustig were selected to examine Sharkey. They were primarily interested in the extent of his injury, and if it had been caused by a low blow. A Dr. Ragan was present during the examination, and he represented Sharkey and his team. He examined Sharkey first. At the conclusion of his examination he turned to Dr. Lustig and said that there were no doubts about Sharkey's injuries.

Dr. Lustig looked Sharkey over and said his injury was not as bad as had been reported. A quarrel developed between the two physicians. According to the December 4, 1896, issue of the *Call*, Ragan responded: "Yes, that may be, but if you look at his eyes you will notice they are effected [sic] by the injury."

"Oh, nonsense!" replied Dr. Lustig. "What on earth do the eyes have to do with this injury?"

The other physicians examined Sharkey and their joint conclusion was announced by Dr. Lustig. The conclusion of the physicians, according to the *Call*, was that the injury, at the time it happened, was not severe enough to have kept Sharkey from continuing the fight. Whether or not the blow which caused the injury was foul was not decided.

The *Chronicle* reported: "Sharkey was examined by a number of physicians and the verdict was heartily in his favor." Later in the column the newspaper hedged on its unequivocal leading statement and reported the physicians' findings a bit more in line with that of the *Call*.

In the meantime, Earp made no effort to reclaim the revolver the police had taken from him in the ring, and since he failed to appear at the police station, four officers were detailed to find him. Officer Frank Riley located Earp at a restaurant and informed him that he was wanted at the police station. Earp went with Officer Riley willingly, and on his arrival at the station Captain Wittman asked him where he had been all day. Earp responded that he had been at the races since that morning. According to the press reports, Earp said: "Since there is so much [damn] talk in town about my decision...I wanted to get away from it." Captain Wittman informed Earp that he was under arrest for carrying a concealed weapon. Earp was conducted to the city jail where the charge was booked against him. He

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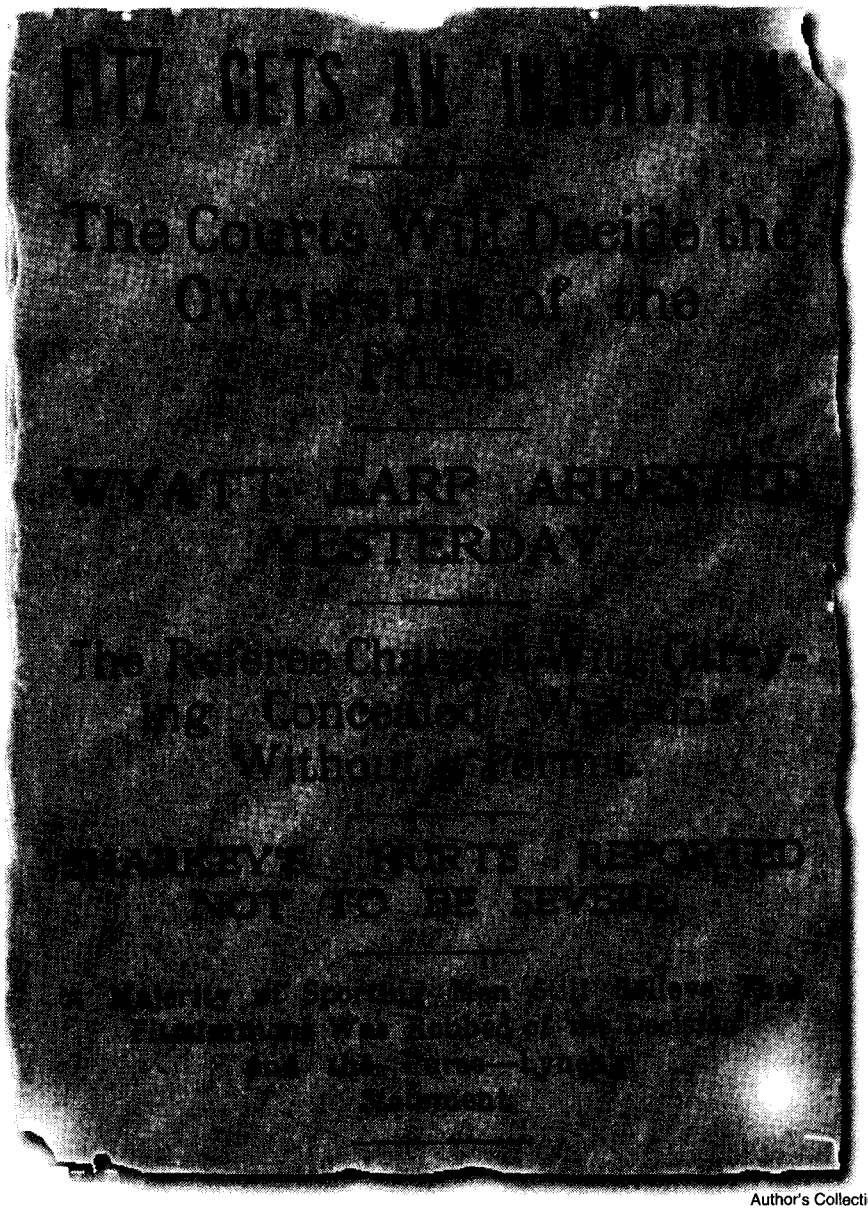
posted a $50 bail and was released.

San Francisco Police Chief Patrick Crowley informed newspaper reporters that Earp wasn't arrested at the time he was relieved of his weapon, as it would have been very impolite to have arrested him in the presence of 12,000 spectators. He explained that the fight spectators would have believed the police were trying to stop the fight over a very trivial matter. Crowley said he didn't know if Earp had a permit to carry a concealed weapon, but it was extraordinary for him to carry a gun while he was in the ring. Earp eventually paid a $50 fine for the charge.

On December 17, 1896, Judge Sanderson held a hearing on the injunction against paying Sharkey the purse. Curiously, even though a number of witnesses testified as to whether or not the fight had been fixed against Fitzsimmons, the case didn't revolve around this issue. The question ultimately was if the fight was illegal in the first place. There was a wide difference between a prizefight and a gloved boxing contest held before a club. A prizefight, in violation of statutes, meant a fight in which the contestants tried to injure each other for money. Prizefighting was illegal in San Francisco at the time; club sanctioned gloved contests were licensed and perfectly legal.

Fitzsimmons had testified that he had fought Sharkey for a purse of $10,000 and had disabled his opponent to the extent he couldn't continue the bout; therefore, he was entitled to the purse. His testimony confirmed that the contest was for a prize and that he had injured Sharkey for money. The court stated that the contest violated the law, and that those who had participated in it were guilty of misdemeanors. The court, therefore, had no interest in the contention of who was entitled to the purse.

At this point, a motion was made by Sharkey's representatives for the injunction to be dismissed and allow their fighter to be paid. The court ordered in favor of the motion, but not before saying that the police and the board of supervisors had winked at the law in permitting the fight to take place and that the matter could be referred to the grand jury. To the astonishment of many San Franciscans who believed the fight had been fixed, Sharkey was awarded the $10,000 purse.


FITZ GETS AN INJUNCTION

The Courts Will Decide the Ownership of the Purse

WYATT EARP ARRESTED YESTERDAY

The Referee Charged with Carrying Concealed Weapons Without Authority

SHARKEY'S COURTS REPORTED NOT TO BE SEVERE

Author's Collection

Legal action taken as a result of the Fitzsimmons-Sharkey fight and Wyatt Earp's arrest made headlines in the December 4, 1896, *San Francisco Call.*

The *Call* referred to the payment as "swag," and the consensus at the time was that Fitzsimmons was cheated. Nat Fleischer, a boxing historian, stated in his 1959 book, *A Pictorial History of Boxing,* "This was a flagrant example of ring robbery, the verdict being rendered by Wyatt Earp, a western marshal, after Sharkey had been knocked out by a blow which had landed fairly above the belt." Fleischer's words were direct, but they reflected the general opinion of the bout since 1896.

Did Referee Wyatt Earp honestly believe he saw Fitzsimmons strike Sharkey a foul blow? Did he declare the battered and beaten Sharkey the winner of the fight from an honest conviction? Or was the old lawman the instrument for a group of conspirators? While the circumstances surrounding the fight indicate it was fixed, the answers to these questions have never been offered, leaving the Fitzsimmons-Sharkey bout a most questionable fight in San Francisco.

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The Last I
Wayne

Author's Collection

John Wayne, the quintessential American movie cowboy.

John Wayne. The name evokes images of patriotism, courage, and the fight for freedom. Though he started as a celluloid cowboy, this man who made Westerns, grew beyond Hollywood and ordinary stardom, and embodied the best of our country. Nineteen years after his death, he's still America's hero.

Born Marion Michael Morrison on May 26, 1907, the son of a druggist, Wayne originally wanted to be a naval officer. When his alternate appointment to Annapolis fell through, he left his home in Winterset, Iowa, and went to California to fulfill an athletic scholarship at the University of Southern California. He got a job picking apricots, drove a truck, then began his career in Hollywood as a prop man at Fox Film Corporation. Soon he found himself in front of the camera.

In 1930, Gary Cooper made seven films; among them was a remake of Rex Beach's *The Spoilers.* Twelve years later, Wayne would make the film again, with Marlene Dietrich and Randolph Scott.

Also in 1930, Cooper was considered for the lead in an epic Western of a Missouri-to-Oregon wagon trek, *The Big Trail,* but he wanted too much money. Director Raoul Walsh looked around for a less expensive actor. John Ford suggested a twenty-three-year-old set mover named Duke Morrison for the part. Walsh

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By Bi

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nterviews: Fonda

On January 6, 1982, Henry Fonda returned home from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center where he had spent several weeks hospitalized for a heart condition. His farewell film, *On Golden Pond,* had recently been released. Plagued by health problems (he had worn a pacemaker for years) our interview had been canceled several times during 1978-79. Prior to our parlay, he didn't know that prostate cancer had spread through his body, but he knew he was sick. It looked like my interview with one of the all-time immortal stars was wishful thinking. Then, on February 1, 1982, Jerry Springer, Fonda's agent, called.

"Be at Fonda's house at ten o'clock tomorrow morning," he said. My photographer, Dave Walton, and I were ecsthatic.

This was to be Henry Fonda's final interview. He died at 8:15 AM, August 12, 1982, at the age of seventy-seven.

"He had a very good night the night before," Shirlee Fonda told me the day he died. "He talked to all of us. He woke up this morning, sat up in bed and quietly stopped breathing."

I feel privileged to have spent five hours with Fonda, plus numerous phone calls back and fourth after his release from the hospital, which added mirthfully to this interview. I think the reader will agree that this

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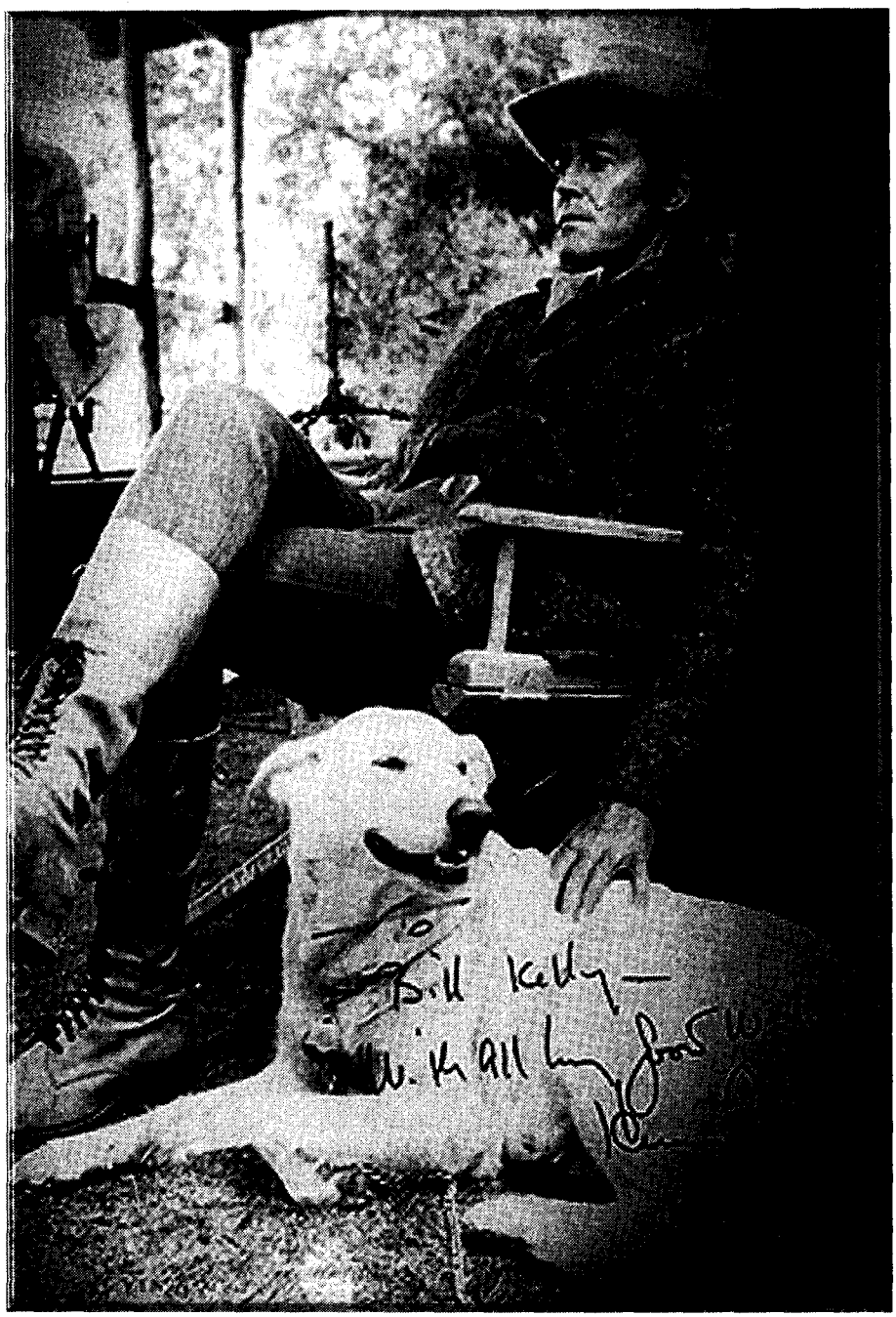

Author's Collection.

Henry Fonda's autographed photo, given to interviewer Bill Kelly.

l Kelly

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Photos by Dave Walton, author's collection.

John Wayne gave his final interview in his home.

hired the youngster, but changed his name to John Wayne because he felt the former name was too sissified for a man of the Duke's stature.

Because *The Big Trail* was not merchandised properly, it was a financial failure and the unknown actor's box-office potential was just about nullified. He spent the next nine years grinding out cheapie Westerns and chapter plays for peanuts.

Over the years, Wayne appeared in over 200 films. Today, many are considered classics, such as *Stagecoach*, in which he rode to fame in the role of "The Ringo Kid." Here again, Wayne owed his good fortune to Gary Cooper, who turned down the script.

Three months before his death, I interviewed "The Duke" three times, once at his home in Newport Beach, California, and twice during lunch meetings. Actually, our talks turned out to be two men reminiscing about old movies rather than regular interviews. Wayne's health was failing, but he seemed in good spirits as he told stories about the old days in Hollywood and the people he'd worked with.

Our five-hour interview at his home in Newport Beach (along with the lunch meetings) suffered numerous interruptions from Wayne's secretary, and phone calls. One of those interruptions will forever remain in my memory. The Duke received a phone call telling him some very important people would be riding on a boat which went down the bay behind his house every day. Those people wanted Wayne to step outside and wave to them when the boat's whistle blew. Wayne refused at first, saying, "What do you mean 'important people'? The most important man on that boat is the guy who's steering it, and I never wave to him!"

Reluctantly, Wayne agreed, only to receive another phone call just as the whistle blew, summoning him to his task. He hesitated for just a moment, then went to answer the phone as he yelled back at me, "Kelly, you're just as fat as I am. Grab that cowboy hat and wave to those people." I did, and proceeded to give perhaps the most convincing imitation of John Wayne ever. The VIPs waved and shouted merrily to the bogus Duke as the boat sailed around the bend.

As to where he got the pseudonym, "Duke," Wayne said during his family's many moves they once lived next to a firehouse. As a small boy he liked to stop and look at the fire engines and talk to the firemen. At this time he had an Airedale dog named Duke, and the firemen started calling him Duke too.

Wayne loved to spin yarns about his old saddle-pards and began with Yakima Canutt, whom he considered the greatest stuntman of them all.

"I suppose if someone were to ask me who I admired most in our industry, I would have to put Yak up there with John Ford—only for different reasons. He was just honored a few weeks ago. It was while I was on my back with this damn illness. I talked with him over the phone. I love him. He's a hell of a guy. Great sense of humor when he was a young guy—before they took him over to Republic and made a company man out of him, but I guess he's lost a little bit of his humor now, or at least it's slowed down."

Rio Lobo, Sons of Katie Elder, The Shootist, Green Berets, True Grit, Rio Bravo, The Spoilers, Pittsburgh— all great films. Which was Wayne's favorite?

"Oh, different movies for different reasons. *True Grit* because I won the Academy Award. *The Alamo* because so much of my money went into it. *The Cowboys* because I loved working with those marvelous kids. But honestly I would have to say *The Searchers*. Which was yours?"

When I told him *The Spoilers*, he lifted his six-feet-four frame from the couch and swung a wild fist in the air.

"Hell of a picture. What's his name? That fellow that...that nice looking, wonderful fellow that played with me in *Pittsburgh* and *The Spoilers* in '42?"

"Randolph Scott," I reminded him.

"Well, it was the best damn fight scene ever filmed in my opinion. There was this fellow named Alan Pomroy who looked so much like this fellow Scott; he could come into a medium shot. So I did most of the fight scenes with him. If there was any falling off balconies, then Ed Parker doubled me. Now, when gangster pictures came in, and all the kids were going to those—they were their heroes, and those Western matinee pictures were falling off, for two years only one man made a series, and that was me. I think it was mainly because of the fights."

The Duke's eyes lit up when I asked him why he never played in a

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personal huddle with Fonda reveals a hitherto hidden side of the man Jack Lemmon called, "the definitive actor."

Supporting his feet on a footstool, Fonda kicked back on the couch in his den and began.

"I've got to face the fact that eventually I'll have to slow down. I'm not looking forward to it. I'm not against retirement, like [James] Cagney had his farm, or Cary Grant, who wanted to quit while he was on top. That's fine for them. I could keep busy with my apple trees. I have enough apples to justify a cider press. Or fool with my bees. I'm the only beekeeper in Bel Air. So far I've put out more than 500 pounds of honey under the label 'Honey from Henry Fonda's Hive.' Forced retirement? Frightening. Gives me the shivers. If it ever happens, well, they might as well strap me to the electric chair and pull the switch."

He was the unchangeable descendant of every speculative, fiercely individualistic pioneer of the leather-stocking days, from the log cabins in the bottom lands of *Drums Along the Mohawk* to the illusionary outbacks of *The Tin Star.*

He was the echo of the frontier that answers a great, deep nostalgia inside Americans who nurse a homesickness for the True West. The vast frontier knew him well, and watched him whooping behind the strays along the cattle-trail, squinting through the dust toward the blazing suns of Colorado, Texas, Missouri, or the rolling plateaus of California.

He was the arrogant officer of *Fort Apache,* a victim of injustice in *Jesse James,* a poor man's champion in *The Return of Frank James,* the genius gunman of *Warlock.* In *My Darling Clementine,* he was the most believable of all the Wyatt Earps to ever grace the screen.

He gave one of the all-time best portrayals of a cowboy with a conscience in *The Ox-Bow Incident.* He was at the peek of his eloquence as an outlaw, in spite of himself, in *Firecreek.*

Outside of the Westerns, which he liked doing most, Henry Fonda fulfilled his function as a victim of circumstance in *Grapes of Wrath, The Wrong Man,* and *The Fugitive.* And of course, there was *Mister Roberts,* the successful Broadway play brought to Hollywood.

Photo by Dave Walton, author's collection.

Henry Fonda gave his final interview in his home, February 2, 1982.

Fonda was born May 16, 1905, in Grand Island, Nebraska, and was raised in Omaha, Nebraska. His dad owned W.D. Fonda Printing Company, and all through high school Henry worked after school as the printer's devil.

"Hell," he said, "there was nothing in my background to say I was going to be an actor. I had gone to college to major in journalism, but after two years I got discouraged. I went back home with my tail between my legs. Dorothy Brando knew I was in need of a job so she gave my mother a name. He turned out to be the director of a little theater, and I was cast in the play before I knew it. I wasn't happy about it. I had no more ambition than a fat lap dog after dinner. Anyway, it was through Marlon Brando's mother that I became an actor."

"I was a prop man, 'go-fer,' and scenic set designer, and had played over 200 bit parts in summer theater, off-Broadway, by the time my big break came in *Farmer Takes a Wife* [1935]. That's experience hard to come by nowadays. The play was such a success in New York that Twentieth Century Fox brought me to California to duplicate my part in the film. I thought hell, if they want to give me all that money, I'll take it."

Fonda, who said he had only seen twenty of his ninety-five films, said *Warlock* was one of the best Westerns he ever made, although he had to be talked into it by Richard Widmark and Tony Quinn. "I wasn't sorry because I had a wonderful time."

Interviewed at his colonial-style Bel Air mansion on the outskirts of Los Angeles, Fonda said his three greatest loves were his wife, Shirlee, his garden, and the theater.

"My garden is my escape from the world," he said. "It's more than a hobby with me—it's part of me. If something is bothering me—I'm a moody bastard—I just go out into my garden and start puttering with my flowers."

As for being moody, Jane Fonda recalled her father was unpredictable as the weather, and said if he didn't feel like talking about something "he simply would not speak to you." She said she would repeat questions time and again and he would ignore her.

Henry Fonda recalled that Jane was an angel when she attended private grade school in Brentwood, but he had a hard time keeping clothes on her. "Away from school," he said,

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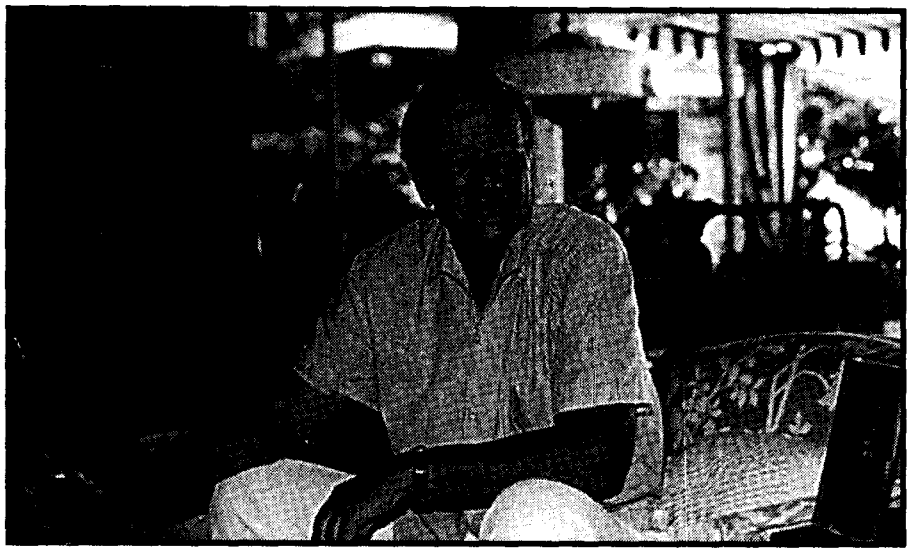

film with Gary Cooper.

"Oh God, I wish we had. You see I never had the build-up by a major star like Coop and Randolph Scott, some of the others had. Paramount spent lots of money on them, and I had to come up the hard way, with exposure to the kids. Ten years in those quickie pictures for nickels and dimes while the others got rich. Now, by the time I was up there, the fellow that wrote that picture Coop did with, ah, you know, when they went down to get the gold in Mexico—the one with the guy with all the big teeth..."

"Burt Lancaster," I reminded him.

"Burt Lancaster. What was the picture he and Coop played in?"

" *Vera Cruz.* "

"That's it. Hell. The guy I helped with *Red River* and everything else, to do that story for my company, went to Burt Lancaster's company instead. Or I'm sure I would have gotten Coop. Or I would have done it with Lancaster, either one. I was damn put out because I wanted to do *Vera Cruz,* which I consider one of the best Westerns ever made. But, that's the only opportunity I know I missed where...[paused to catch his breath]...God, I'd loved to have worked with ol' Coop. When I was still doing those quickie Westerns, I tried to get in *The Plainsman* to play Bill Cody, just to work with ol' Coop. Cecil B. DeMille directed that.

"Well, anyway, I was called over there by DeMille. I sat outside that bastard's office and I could look in there and see him just thinking. He was talking to a casting director. So after about an hour—the son-of-a-bitch kept me waiting that long—he came out and said, 'Well, I'm going to lunch.' My agent said, 'You asked John Wayne to come over for an interview.' DeMille said, 'Oh yeah, so I did. Come along.' Well, that's what you say to a dog.

"Now we're walking along and he says, 'Oh, you were in *The Big Trail.*' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'You were very good in that, but that was some time ago, wasn't it?' 'Yeah,' I said, 'I've been doing quickie pictures, and I think I've learned to read bad lines as well as anybody, and how to throw them away. But I'd like the opportunity now to get someplace, and I hope I can get a crack at this Cooper picture.' DeMille looks me up and down like he was my tailor, and says, 'Well, you were okay in that other thing, but of course a lotta water's run under the bridge, and I'll get back with you.' That's the last I heard of it. They gave the part to someone else [James Ellison]."

"Now, in 1939 I made *Stagecoach* with John Ford, and DeMille was going to make a picture with Coop. The mounted police and the Texan, you know..."

"Northwest Mounted Police," I reminded him.

"Yeah. Now DeMille called up Republic and said he wanted me to come over and play the mounted policeman. And I just didn't go over, and they said, 'Christ, this guy is after you!' I said, 'No,' just send the word back, 'A lotta water's run under the bridge!'

"He got Preston Foster. Well, in those tight pants and everything, he wasn't very good on a horse anyway, and I guess he just murdered ol' Pres all through the picture, because he kept seeing me in the part."

We can only conjecture how Coop and Duke might have felt about each other if they had the opportunity to work together in the same film. In 1952, Gary Cooper played the part of Marshal Will Kane in *High Noon.* He won his second Academy Award (*Sergeant York* was his first). Wayne's resentment toward *High Noon* was voiced loudly. I asked him why.

"This gesture of tossing his marshal's badge in the dirt—showing contempt for the townspeople who refused to help him defend their rights was like belittling a medal of honor. That's why Howard Hawks and I got together and made *Rio Bravo.* Ours was a gesture of respect for the institution of law and order. Something we felt was absent in *High Noon.* That picture was not a good example for our industry."

Still, at the Academy Awards ceremonies in 1953, Wayne accepted the Oscar on Cooper's behalf since Coop was in the South Pacific filming. In his speech for the event, Wayne said, "I'm glad to see that they're giving this man, who is not only deserving, but has conducted himself throughout his years in our business in a manner we can all be proud of."

How could Duke have been "proud of" a man who won an Oscar for a picture he considered only corrupted the business?

If you think I asked him that, you're crazy.

By 1948, the eyes began to furrow, the skin crinkled. The old familiar walk became too characteristic. His eleven-year marriage to Josephine Saenz ended abruptly; she got custody of their four kids. Wayne slipped to Number 33 at the

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"Jane and a girlfriend would strip naked and ride horseback through the then wilderness of Brentwood, startling kids at play and people out for walks."

Fonda said "acting is fun, not work. I have to be aware that it's not the same for my wife. She has to live my life. You don't go to bed until 2 AM, and you get up at ten, have lunch at four o'clock and nap for an hour or so before you go to the theater. It's not easy on the wife, but for me...it's holiday time.

"Shirlee Adams was a full-time stewardess when we were introduced by a press agent. Three years later, in 1965, she became my fifth wife. A Midwesterner, she'd been a faithful churchgoer, didn't believe in smoking, liquor, coffee, dancing, or movies. She was raised in an orphanage. At eighteen she entered American Airlines' stewardess school. People fall in love at first sight. After I met Shirlee, I wanted to send her valentines every day. She turned me around."

Fonda acknowledged the box-office urgency to keep making films, even run-of-the-mill Western biopics, when major roles were not available. But he cited the unmatchable rewards of acting on stage, where a role could be created and developed from beginning to end, in contrast to the disjointed out-of-continuity of shooting motion pictures.

"In films, an assistant director calls and says, 'Mr. Fonda, we're gonna start on Monday on Stage 11 with scenes 48 and 49.' So you learn those scenes, which is never more than three pages of script. The scene is nothing more than maybe thirty seconds. A three-minute scene is a big deal. Before lunch you've done that scene, it's gone to the laboratory, and that was your performance. You never do it again. You do scenes out of continuity, out of context, for five to fifteen weeks.

"So if they like it afterwards, you are happy that they liked it, but you never did play that part from beginning to end, and never felt that you really created that character. That's basically the reason why I love the

theater. That's really where you get a chance to build a performance and do it again and again. I did *Mister Roberts* for four years, consecutively, three years in New York and a year on tour. Opening night of *Mister Roberts* was probably the most exciting night of my entire life. Four years later when we closed in Los Angeles, it was better."

Did Henry push his children, Jane and Peter, into entertainment?

"No way! Nor did I discourage them. Although I was the first in the family to ever try the theater, by the time the kids were old enough to decide for themselves, I'd learned enough to know that you should let them make up their own minds. Also, I was aware of what heartbreak and tragedy can be if you don't make it.

"Now it's bad enough to be a failure, but if your old man or your mother was successful, then it's rougher. But, I didn't have to hold my breath too long because they were both successful right away. In the early days they didn't ask my advice, but now we're contemporaries. I'm not the old man with two kids; we're all three of us actors."

Asked how he wanted to be remembered when the final curtain came down, Fonda squinted and said: "I've been an actor for fifty-four years. If I was a good actor, if I gave people pleasure, I would like to think they would remember me that way. What else? I'm not a good citizen, because I haven't been a citizen in the sense that Jane has. Getting involved.

"People say to me, 'How does it feel to be a superstar?' I never think of myself as a superstar, or even a star. I'm an actor that wants to do a job. I hear myself now, saying those words, and I sorta don't like it because it sounds like horseshit. But it's true. Humble Henry? If that's what you think. But I'm just a guy trying to do the job. Make a living like anybody else. I'm still an actor like I was fifty-six years ago. I'm secure. Am I gonna be able to do as well as I want to? Are other actors gonna like working with me? Which is very important to me—to be 'one of the boys.' Now that sounds humble, doesn't it? I don't mean it to sound that way, but that's how I feel."

Henry said the most fun he had in the business was playing against image, where he was usually applauded by the critics.

"Actually, the worst flat-out son-of-a-bitch I ever played was in *Once Upon a Time in the West* [1968]. I mean, his opening scene was when he massacred a farm family of a father, and his two daughters, and their two sons. I mean, flat-out bang! Like that! A nine-year-old boy. Now you can't get any worse than that. Jane was living in Paris at the time and she saw it there and wrote me a fan letter: 'Dad, that's the most exciting thing I've ever seen you do!' I got a fan letter from John Wayne and Kirk Douglas. Look, it

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box office.

Then screenwriter Borden Chase, who idolized Wayne, created for him a role that would put him back on top literally overnight, and for the next twenty years. I perceived *Red River* as a western version of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, with Chase swapping the ocean for the plains, and Wayne as a frontier Captain Bligh.

Author's Collection

John Wayne won an Oscar for his 1969 portrayal of Rooster Cogburn in *True Grit*.

Wayne's near run-in with baseball manager, Leo Durocher was uncommon knowledge, but I remembered reading something about it, so I asked him if it were true.

"Well, we were making *Tycoon* and I had a number of love scenes with Laraine Day. Day and this fellow Durocher were newlyweds, and he made a pest of himself almost everyday on the set. Every damn time I clinched with her—he had trouble realizing it was make-believe—he looked as though somebody on the other team had just stolen home. They got into a couple of heated arguments over it. I finally had to tell him to get the hell off the set and not to come back until the shooting was over."

"Did he?" I asked.

"Wouldn't you?" he said with a mischievous glint in his eyes.

"Hell," Duke said. "Who'd get jealous of an ugly bastard like me? I stopped getting the girl many years ago, which was just as well because I had forgotten what I wanted her for."

When I asked Wayne if any particular scene in any one film stood out in his mind. He laughed, and snapped, "*Tall In The Saddle*" [1944].

It starred Ella Raines and his college chum, Ward Bond. In this picture, Wayne was a woman-hating cowboy who took over as ranch foreman, only to find out that the new owners are a spinster and her young niece. Wayne looked back....

"Now I walked up to this heavy and he starts, and I says, 'You pull on that gun and I'll kill ya.' He didn't pull it, and I just wind up and hit him over the goddamned head, walked away, and now, this little old lady comes running out and says, 'I saw you strike that man!' And I says, 'Yes ma'am, just as hard as I could!' [laughs]. 'Yes, ma'am, just as hard as I could!' Great scene!"

Asked if he had ever been afraid of anything in his life, Wayne answered: "When I was a kid, I used to shoot rattlesnakes to protect my father while he was working our land. I guess it made me a crack shot with a rifle, knowing a miss could cost my dad his life. But shooting those snakes also gave me many sleepless nights—visions of thousands of slithering snakes coming after me. I used to wake up in a cold sweat in the middle of the night, but my dad, or my family, never knew it. I kept my fears to myself.

"I think the experience has helped me through long, lonely nights with this cancer thing. It is only natural for people to resist death. There's something inside you that tugs, makes you want to stick around a while longer. I feel it every time I think about it. But I thank the man upstairs for looking after me. I can talk about it, because if I can help some poor devil, or at least give him hope, or encourage him to get early checkups, I'm well repaid."

If he had his life to live over again, would he have done anything differently?

"One time I caught a giant mahi mahi in the waters off Hawaii. I weighed the fish, then ate it. Later, when the boat docked, I discovered I had eaten the world's record for that species. I should have had that son-of-a-bitch mounted!"

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ran for five years in Paris and went through the States like a fast breeze. Around the world it was one of the biggest Western money-makers ever!

"We made it in Italy—a 'spaghetti Western' they call them. It was stylized homicide on the range. I think it was the best thing Sergio Leone ever directed. It was one of the few films I enjoyed seeing myself in.

"In *Firecreek*, I tried to kill Jimmy Stewart. Now you can't get worse than that. I mean, who the hell in their right mind would want to kill Jimmy Stewart? Nothing but a flat-out son-of-a-bitch. Look, a guy who would harm Jimmy Stewart would put down Mom and apple pie.

"Now that I see what the end of the road looks like, I'm remembering the times I've come to a crossroad, and it reminds me of the Robert Frost poem, 'The road not taken...Two roads diverged in the yellow woods...and so I could not travel both and be one traveler....' Anyway, he's hiking in the woods and comes to a path. Which way should he go? Well, anybody can remember sometime when they had to make that decision to make. In my lifetime I can remember dozens, and it's fun to think about—what if I hadn't taken that road? Where would I be today? I'm an actor. When that decision came, I chose the path. It seemed to be a step backward at the time because I wasn't interested in acting—everything was there to discourage me. The only job I could get was a scenic set designer. I couldn't get arrested as an actor. I was pushed by fate. What if my mother didn't know Marlon Brando's mother? I don't know what I would have done.

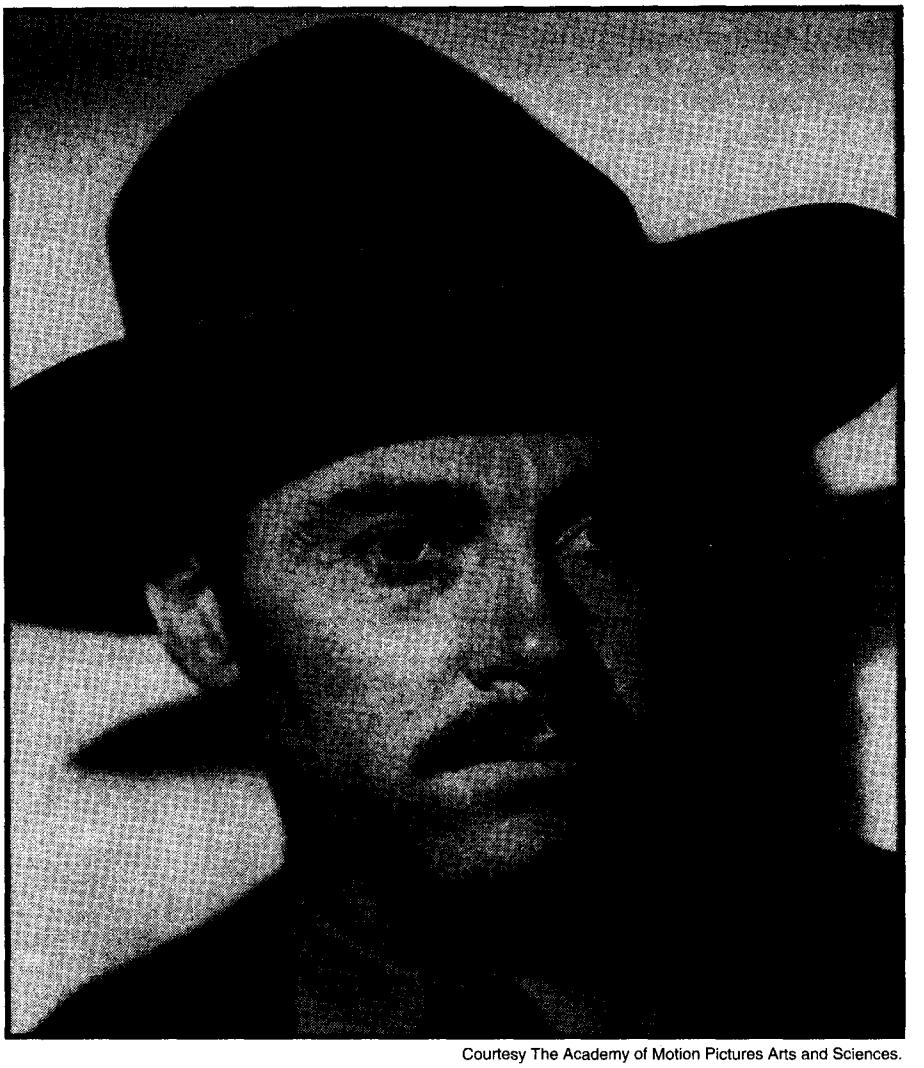
"I can still go back to New York, fifty years later, and see familiar faces, still trampling the sidewalks, as I did, from agent to agent. They never made it, but never gave up. God bless them. They make their livings being live models at automobile shows, or TV commercials. People with ambition—who fate frowned upon. I wonder, if I had taken their path where would I be today? You never know."

When I told Fonda how much I enjoyed his portrayal of Frank James in *Jesse James* and *The Return of Frank James* he replied, "I never saw either of those pictures. Never wanted to."

Asked who his favorite director was, Fonda said, "John Ford. He was sadistic, but never with me. He had his whipping boys, and if you were close to him, you understood that you were his whipping boy, at least for that picture, and you accepted it.

"Ward Bond was usually the whipping boy. He hated Ford. Even the Duke [John Wayne] sometimes, but Duke was close enough that he knew how to take it. I've been on films with Ford when an actor would walk out on the picture in tears, saying, 'I'll never work with that bastard again.' And they didn't. Walter Brennan was one."

During John Wayne's last interview, he told me, "Hank Fonda will probably never get an Academy Award. He makes it look too damn easy." When I told Fonda this, he said, "Let's get this thing out in the open. I don't believe in Academy Awards. I wouldn't write a letter like, ah, George C. Scott did, or make a big deal of turning it down, or send somebody else to accept it with a message from God. I don't believe in that. I think it's the wrong attitude for actors. How can you pick Woody Allen at his best, Jack Lemmon at his best, Marlon Brando—but *he was* best! You can't compare Brando's performance with a Woody Allen performance. They were both great in their own way. Aside from the fact I don't think it's healthy. It's embarrassingly political. You pick up a trade



Courtesy The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences.

Henry Fonda as Frank James, from the film *The Return of Frank James*.

Continued on page 36.

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Wayne cont.

On Friday, June 15, 1979, they played the theme song from *The High and Mighty* and buried Marion Michael Morrison, whom the world had come to know as John Wayne. Since he had been converted to the Catholic faith on his deathbed, a Mass of Christian burial was said over his body early that morning at Our Lady Queen of the Angeles Roman Catholic Church in Corona del Mar.

An entourage of twenty cars accompanied the body to a final resting place in Pacific View Memorial Park, overlooking his Newport Harbor home. The family went to great lengths to keep the time and place of the services a secret. None of the great stars he had worked with over the years were present. His seven children were there, Michael, Patrick, Ethan, Toni, Melinda, Aissa, and Marissa. So were his twenty-one grandchildren.

The grave site was a simple plot, and the bronze casket was covered with red antheriums. A dozen baskets of flowers had been selected by the family for the altar. A few trees stood near the grave but there were no special landmarks or grave marker to guide the curious to the site.

In the distance, the bay glistened in the early morning sunlight. Beyond, the blue Pacific that Wayne had sailed so often in his beloved *Wild Goose* was calm and expressionless, and as quiet as the grave itself.

The final fadeout?

"Well," he told me, "I'd like to be remembered—the Mexicans have a phrase, '*Feo, fuerte y formal.*' It means: 'He was ugly, was strong, and had dignity.'"

Fonda cont.

paper that's packed with $1,000 ads reminding you so-and-so was outstanding. They spend thousands of dollars to win. You can't blame them, because it's worth millions at the box office. That's the reason I got out of the country when I was nominated for *Grapes of Wrath.* So, what will I do if I win for *Golden Pond*? Frankly I'll cross that bridge when I come to it. If I accept, it will be for my grandkids. Certainly not for myself, because I don't believe in awards — period! Now I hope that doesn't sound ungrateful."

Fonda later accepted an Oscar for *On Golden Pond* after his first nomination in forty-two years.

Fonda's closest friend, Jimmy Stewart, said it best: "The world lost a great talent with the passing of Henry Fonda, but he will live on in film for all time, so our children's children will know what a fine actor he was."

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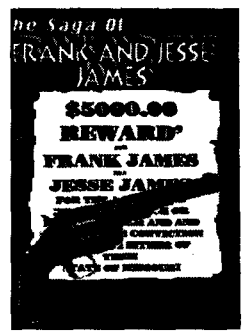

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The Fight for Billy's Body

By Chris Roberts

In the early 1960s, Lincoln County, New Mexico, once again provided the backdrop for a clash between two opposing factions. At issue, whether the earthly remains of Henry McCarty, alias William H. Bonney, alias Billy the Kid, should be removed from Fort Sumner and re-buried in the small town of Lincoln. The matter would ultimately be settled in the courtroom, in contrast to the law of the gun that ruled Lincoln County in Billy's day.

Some similarities can be found in the Lincoln County War of 1878 and the legal battle over Billy's body in 1961. The motivating factor behind the disinterment was driven by economics, as was the Lincoln County War. The commissioners of Lincoln County denied money was the reason to move the body, but offered no plausible explanation other than Billy had spent time in Lincoln during the war and following his capture and conviction for the murder of Sheriff William Brady.

Another example of the two stories intertwining can be found in the case of the interlopers, John Tunstall, who arrived in Lincoln in 1877, and Lois Telfer, who appeared on the scene in 1957. Tunstall, an English merchant, established a mercantile store and cattle operation in direct opposition to the political and economic monopoly of Lawrence G. Murphy and James J. Dolan. Thus, the war was fought. Telfer, a New York cosmetician, arrived in Lincoln with spurious family documents relating to the Bonney name. The Lincoln County commisoners viewed Miss Telfer's petition to move Billy as an opportunity to gain added revenue. Thus, the legal war was fought.

When Lois Telfer first appeared, claiming to be a descendant of Billy the Kid, there was obvious skepticism on the part of Lincoln residents. After all, this was a mere seven years after O.L. "Brushy Bill"

Lincoln Heritage Trust

Billy the Kid.

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Where Did He Get the Gun?

By Drew Gomber

There has been an argument going on for some time now—117 years to be exact—concerning exactly how Billy the Kid got the gun that he used to kill J.W. Bell during his escape from the Lincoln County Courthouse in 1881.

Sentenced to death in La Mesilla for the 1878 murder of Sheriff William Brady, the Kid was transported to Lincoln, where he was scheduled to be executed on May 13, 1881.

When Lincoln County Sheriff Pat Garrett left town (some say to gather wood for the gallows, others to collect taxes, still others to both collect taxes *and* gather wood—is there nothing clear about this incident?), he repeatedly instructed his deputies, Bob Olinger and J.W. Bell, not to be taken in by the Kid's charm and easygoing manner. This was no problem for Olinger, a man many claimed to be a hulking bully, who hated the Kid.

J.W. Bell was a different case. Although he was reportedly a member of the White Oaks posse that surrounded the Kid and his gang at the Greathouse Ranch, and participated in the siege in which posseman Jim Carlyle met his death, Bell had no personal previous history with the Kid. He even seemed to feel sorry for the young outlaw.

That's understandable. It is difficult, even now, not to feel at least a twinge of sympathy for Billy. Of all the atrocities committed during the Lincoln County War, all the murders, the only person ever to stand trial for *anything* was Billy the Kid.

Most of the details of the Kid's escape are pretty straightforward. We know that Bell escorted Billy out back to the privy, undoubtedly at Billy's request. After the Kid was finished, Bell escorted him back into the courthouse. Moments later a shot rang out from inside the building. This shot was, in the words of New Mexico State Monument Manager Jack Rigney, "earwitnessed" by Godfrey "Old Man" Gauss. (It should be noted that, in those days, anyone over the age of fifty was usually referred to as "Old Man.")

Some time before Bell's death, Bob Olinger had escorted the courthouse's other five prisoners across the street to the Wortley Hotel for lunch. The deputies felt, with good reason, that the Kid was far too dangerous to be wandering around town.

So they left him in the courthouse.

With only one guard.

In a room that was next to the armory.

Pat Garrett later stated that the armory had a "bum door" on it. Therefore, they held the most notorious man in New Mexico *next to a room full of guns that they could not lock.*

Go figure.

When Olinger heard the gunshot, he leaped to his feet and raced across the street. While Olinger was doing this, the Kid was racing into the armory to procure Olinger's shotgun.

During Billy's incarceration in the courthouse, it was reported that Olinger had pointed his shotgun at the Kid and announced that "whoever gets this will feel it." The Kid supposedly replied, "Make sure it's not you, Bob."

Whatever the case, the Kid went out of his way to get hold of Olinger's

Billy the Kid's grave, Fort Sumner, New Mex

Roberts claimed, and later was discredited, of being Billy the Kid. Unlike the case of Roberts, Lois Telfer's claim was taken quite seriously by government officials. Local politicians were eager to cash in on the tourist dollars Billy's body represented.

The county commissioners afforded Telfer's documentation with only a limited degree of skepticism. Telfer offered all the pieces of the puzzle, with the exception of the most important, the identity of Billy the Kid's father. The commissioners were willing to overlook this because Lois Telfer claimed to be writing the "true" story of Billy, and wanted to save this important revelation for her book.

Lois Telfer stated that Billy's grandfather was a man named Barnabus Bonney. Barnabus lived in the town of Lyons, Wayne County, New York, in the early nineteenth century. Both the 1820 and 1830 federal census confirm this fact. Barnabus married Kesia Park, and on July 5, 1826, Kesia gave birth to twin sons. One twin was named Orris, the other twin's name remains unknown. This nameless twin was claimed to have been the father of Billy the Kid. Birth records are next to impossible to locate in that era, but census records for 1830 show two males under the age of five in the Barnabus Bonney household. It is this tenuous thread which holds the Telfer claim together.

The Barnabus family moved to Michigan in 1836, as confirmed by records for the Lyons Baptist Church in Wayne County, New York. The congregation voted to dismiss Brother and Sister Bonney on

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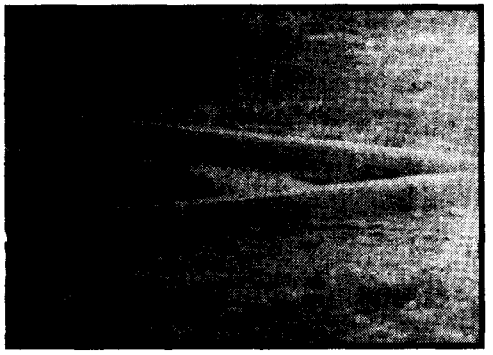

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October 25, 1835. According to church minutes, Brother Bonney had moved to Michigan by March 1836. Michigan census records for 1840 and 1850 confirm the existence of the Barnabus family.

The 1850 census lists Orris, now twenty-three, as living with a wife and child. The census strengthens Telfer's claim that the twins were born in 1826.

Miss Telfer began bolstering her claim in a number of ways. First, she contacted the Old Lincoln County Memorial Commission and established Nan Boylan as her contact. Telfer then donated a paisley shawl that belonged to Kesia Bonney. The item was received in 1957. A document was enclosed with the shawl that showed Lois Telfer's connection to the Bonneys, entitled: "Bonney Family Tree." What is interesting about this document is the listing of a William Bonney as Billy's father. In Telfer's newspaper interviews and personal correspondence, she would not commit to a specific name for the Kid's father.

Telfer donated more family items to the Old Lincoln County Memorial Commission in 1959 and 1960. Each item was assigned an accession number.

The next step was to contact two noted western authors and Lincoln County researchers, Philip Rasch and Robert Mullin. Rasch was in correspondence with Telfer as early as 1957. It would prove to be a frustrating experience. He finally wrote off Miss Telfer, and her claim, in an 1983 article. Mr. Mullin went to New York and interviewed Telfer from 1958 through 1960. Mullin was more favorable to the Bonney connection,

shotgun. Bell was shot with a revolver, but the Kid seemed determined to kill Olinger with his own weapon.

Which is exactly what he did.

As "Pecos Bob" came under the northeast corner window of the courthouse, he heard a voice call out above him. "Hello, Bob. Look up here and see what you get." What Olinger got was both barrels of his own shotgun in the face and chest. He died instantly.

However, how Bob Olinger met his end has never been in question. It has been Bell's death that has kept the historical debate going all this time.

We know that Bell was shot on the stairwell inside the courthouse, staggered out back, and died in front of "Old Man" Gauss.

Gauss later stated that he heard a struggle inside the courthouse, just before Bell came stumbling out the back door.

Basically, there are three schools of thought concerning what happened inside the courthouse that day. The first is that the Kid raced ahead of Bell, crashed through the armory's "bum door," grabbed a gun and shot Bell as he raced up the stairs, trying to catch up.

The second is that the Kid overpowered Bell on the stairs and snatched Bell's weapon from him.

The third is that a friend, of whom Billy had many in Lincoln, left a gun in the privy for him. The Kid concealed it on his person until he and Bell were inside, at which point the Kid pulled the pistol.

Let's look at these three options, keeping in mind that this is merely the way that this writer sees it.

I have a problem with the theory that the Kid raced ahead of Bell to seize a weapon from the armory. Quite simply, how could Billy race *anywhere* with leg irons on? A prisoner in leg irons was only capable of taking "baby steps."

The Kid overpowering Bell on the stairs is a much more likely possibility. Godfrey Gauss stated that he heard a struggle in the courthouse, and it is a matter of record that Bell had a fractured skull at the time of his death. These facts alone would seem to prove almost conclusively that this is the correct theory. But hold on a second. There are a couple of extenuating circumstances concerning Godfrey Gauss.

There is an abiding story in Lincoln that a gun was left for Billy in the privy by John Tunstall's former clerk, Sam Corbet. What many people seem to forget is that Godfrey Gauss had been also employed by Tunstall, as a cook. Who's to say that Gauss wasn't actually in on it with Sam Corbet?

Personally, I don't think the idea of Corbet and Gauss being in

Courtesy Bob Boze Bell

Robert Olinger's shotgun, which Billy the Kid used with deadly effect during his escape.

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cahoots is any stretch at all. It is a matter of historical fact that Tunstall's former employees, however misguided, were extremely loyal to their boss, even after his death.

For Gauss to say that he heard a struggle on the stairs, which would give more weight to the idea of the Kid seizing Bell's pistol, would have been a logical thing to say to protect Sam Corbet.

But, what about Bell's fractured skull? Wouldn't that have indicated some sort of struggle? Well, yes. Unless, Bell fractured his skull as he tumbled down the stairs *after* the Kid shot him. It would be pretty hard to stay on your feet on a stairwell after having a heavy caliber slug pass through your body. No one knows exactly where on that stairwell Bell was when he was hit, or how far down he tumbled.

To me, it looks like the gun was hidden in the privy and "Old Man" Gauss said whatever was necessary to protect Sam Corbet.

Pat Garrett never really looked into the matter of where the Kid got the gun. It was probably immaterial to him. To Garrett, the real problem was that he had two dead deputies on his hands and would have to "do it all over again" to catch Billy.

Where and how Billy the Kid got the revolver that he used to kill J.W. Bell will be debated ad infinitum by historians, with each having his or her pet theory. At this late date, the mystery will probably never be solved, and in the end it really doesn't matter. What does matter is that in the early afternoon hours of April 28, 1881, Billy the Kid made what is arguably the most spectacular jailbreak in the history of the Old West.

Drew Gomber is a historian at the Lincoln Historical Museum, in Lincoln, New Mexico. This is his first article for True West.

as reflected in his writings. In seeking out both authors, Telfer hoped to legitimize her claim around a cloak of scholarly importance. She was only moderately successful.

As a last attempt at legitimacy, Lois Telfer engaged in gathering public support and media coverage. On a tour of Lincoln and the surrounding area, Telfer met with and had a photograph taken with Helena Coe LeMay, a descendant of Frank Coe. Frank Coe rode and fought alongside Billy the Kid in the Lincoln County War. The photo was taken in July 1960, and on the back appears a handwritten note: "Lois Telfer & Helena Coe LeMay, July 1960. Walking in the footsteps of their ancestors: Frank B. Coe & Billy the Kid." Local newspaper coverage included mention of Telfer's plan to visit and lay flowers at Billy's grave. With the support of the county commissioners squarely behind Lois Telfer, the stage was set for the ensuing legal fight.

The Clovis, New Mexico, *News-Journal* for June 27, 1961, reported: "The fight for the body of Billy the Kid moved out of the realm of idle chit-chat and into the courts." A keen observation indeed. The filing of the petition brought bitter feelings and pitted Lincoln against Fort Sumner. Included in the petition was the charge that when Fort Sumner was abandoned by the military, maintenance and up-keep of the cemetery reverted to the De Baca County commissioners, as Fort Sumner is located in De Baca County. An additional allegation in the petition charged that the cemetery was allowed to become desecrated and commercialized. A Mrs. J.W. Allen was named in the suit because it was her responsibility to care for Billy's grave.

The petition then related that a suitable burial place had been found in Lincoln, and that the De Baca Board of Commissioners refused to have Billy's body removed to Lincoln. Mrs. Allen was charged in the suit with objecting to the removal and promising to interfere with any such removal. Finally, a request was made asking the court to authorize the removal of the body to Lincoln for burial, and that a restraining order be invoked against the De Baca County commissioners and Mrs. Allen to prevent their interference.

Western Publications Archives

Fort Sumner, New Mexico, at about the time of Billy's death.

On November 16, 1961, in Fort Sumner, Judge E.T. Hensley, Jr., dismissed a four-count motion seeking dismissal of the petition. The dismissal motion was filed by District Attorney Victor C. Breen of Fort Sumner. Judge Hensley rendered his decision after hearing the testimony of three witnesses, and the lawyer representing the petitioner, C.C. Chase, Jr.

Chase, in seeking to avert the dismissal, stated that the testimony had

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in no way shown that any person was buried within forty to fifty feet of the grave believed to be that of William H. Bonney, alias Billy the Kid. The bodies of Tom O'Folliard, Charlie Bowdre, and Billy were believed to be buried together. This undocumented argument was the main thrust of District Attorney Breen's case. Assistant District Attorney John Humphrey, Jr., represented the district attorney's office in the motion. Chase asked for a injunction against the De Baca County commissioners to prevent their interference in the removal. To support the request, Chase entered into evidence a reply letter from the De Baca commissioners which posed a "clear-cut threat to dispose of anyone who seeks to remove the body of Billy the Kid." As reported in the Clovis *News-Journal* for November 16, 1961, "This comment produced a wave of laughter from the packed courtroom."

Humphrey stated that prior to a 1904 flood, there were no markers in the cemetery, and there was even less certainty as to the location of Billy's body after the flood. Humphrey stated that testimony provided by Luciano Frank Silva showed that the current marker for Billy's grave was picked as a "best guess" because no landmarks existed on the exact location of burial. Silva's grandfather, Jesus Silva, along with Vincentia Otero and Francisco Lovato, met at the graveyard in the late 1920s to locate the grave. After much argument, the three men selected the spot where the marker was placed. Luciano said all three "had a different idea" as to where the marker should be placed.

To further establish that no markers were in the graveyard, Carlos F. Clancy testified there there was no marker at the grave of Billy the Kid prior to 1904. Fort Sumner mortician Walter Julian testified that in 1946, several graves had to be dug in the old cemetery before a vacant spot could be found. Under cross-examination, Julian said no attempts were made to bury anyone in the immediate vicinity of Billy's grave. Following the ruling, Judge Hensley set a date for a hearing for the petition itself.

Author's Collection

Helena Coe LeMay, left, and Lois Telfer posed for this photograph behind the Lincoln County Courthouse, July 1960.

The hearing on the petition restated the above mentioned arguments, with the inclusion of testimony by Louis Bowdre. Bowdre, from Bartlesville, Oklahoma, claimed to be the last living relative of Charles Bowdre. On January 24, 1962, he asked the court to prevent anyone from disturbing his relative's body.

The *El Paso Herald-Post* for March 13, 1962, published the results of the protracted fight for Billy the Kid's body. Federal District Judge E. T. Hensley denied the petition to remove Billy's remains from Fort Sumner to Lincoln. Judge Hensley also upheld several phases of a motion by the defendants, De Baca County, and Mrs J.W. Allen, for dismissal. The hearing was abbreviated and to the point. Fort Sumner was victorious, and continues to provide the final resting place for Billy the Kid.

Lois Telfer and the Lincoln County commissioners proved unsuccessful in their attempt to remove Billy the Kid's body. The motivation for the county commisioners was clearly financial, although Miss Telfer's motive was less clear. If, as she stated, she was a descendant of Billy, why have the body moved to Lincoln? It would make more sense to have the body brought to Michigan, where Telfer and the Bonneys were raised. Telfer's reason for the petition remains a mystery.

A Final Note: In an ironic twist, the shawl that Lois Telfer donated in 1957 is currently on display in the visitor's center at the Fort Sumner State Monument.

In the course of researching the historical validity of the shawl, Scott Smith, Fort Sumner monument manager, stated that "the shawl is of no historical significance to Billy the Kid or Fort Sumner." Charles Bennett, assistant director, History Division, Museum of New Mexico, informed me "that the Museum of New Mexico can neither confirm nor refute the claim by Miss Lois Telfer that the paisely [sic] shawl on display at Fort Sumner State Monument belonged to relatives of William H. Bonney, also known as Henry McCarty."

Lois Telfer went to New Mexico claiming to be a cousin of Billy the Kid with a paper trail that led nowhere. It is a fitting tribute to Miss Telfer that the shawl she donated is on exhibit at the Fort Sumner State Monument with no documentary evidence to support its connection to Billy the Kid.

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Eve Ball: Woman Among Men

By Lynda A. Sánchez

Sometimes it is good to remember those "who have gone before." Eve Ball (1890-1984) stands tall among those who treasured and preserved western heritage. She was a devoted contributor to innumerable magazines, but perhaps her most enjoyable times were writing for Western Publications. She wrote close to 100 articles over the years, and her correspondence with True West *editor Pat Wagner and others was humorous, touching, and always educational.*

Eve Ball chuckled when asked about her own life, and like the rugged and elusive pioneers she often wrote about, turned the conversation from herself to others. Among her Indian friends she was known affectionately as "The Old White Lady with Many Stories." She was well loved by Anglo, Hispanic, and Apache peoples. Eve's story is an inspiring one to all of those who care to make a difference in the world. She affected my life dramatically, and was the most remarkable person I have ever known.

Eve Ball dispelled traditional myths of aging and women's roles in a male-dominated society, as she set out in her determined way to write history her way. She always emphasized that most people dislike history because too many teachers and authors present it in a stilted, academic manner. Not so with Eve. Perhaps that was because her own life was rich and exciting beyond what most people ever experience.

She came from a family background that provided her with a fascinating and adventuresome history. Born in Kentucky, her roots encompassed the Confederate South and the era of plantation and slave. However, when she was young, her family moved to a cattle ranch in Kansas. By the age of four she began to read, and by age twelve she was already bored with conventional education. At sixteen she was employed by Kansas schools to teach. She even coached junior high boys basketball.

Author's Collection

Eve Ball, 1916.

At the turn of the century in rural Kansas there was no Equal Rights Amendment or Women's Lib movement, yet this spunky young woman seemed to rebel at every turn. First, she preferred to earn her own living, and that was almost unheard of in those days. She received university degrees in English and education and taught several grades in her hometown. Later, during the dust bowl era, Eve taught junior college English in Dodge City, Kansas. Even several of the wild oil boom towns of New Mexico and Texas were graced by this enthusiastic and intense young educator.

Perhaps it was "fate" that kept luring her ever westward. She came as a widow to the

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Southwest, and was a determined one. For a while she operated a "dude ranch" near Phoenix, Arizona. She had purchased La Casa Hermosa from the famous western artist, Lon Megar-gee. In Arizona she visited sites of Indian battles and military forts and with historians of the region. She ventured into New Mexico on several occasions, always searching for a special area to call home. Ruidoso, New Mexico, became that home.

As most were facing retirement, Eve was just beginning her new career. Though she was approaching sixty, the early years of her life had prepared her for what was to come. Eve had always loved reading and speaking with "old timers." She had acquired a profound respect for history, and knew well that those who did not respect their history had no future, and were often doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past. Undoubtedly her years as an English teacher refined the writing skill that was to blossom very soon near the land of the Mescalero Apaches, and the ranch people who she grew to admire. Eve was literally surrounded by tradition and the makings of terrific and heretofore unpublished materials.

In the late 1940s a home was constructed for her by several Hispanic residents of the region. Eve was a gardener and she searched for a special site that would allow her to be creative, yet at one with her surroundings. She planted wild Castillian roses that cascaded blossoms of creamy gold during the spring. Purple-hued irises and apricot trees, peonies of all colors, and fragrant lilacs also added their subtle beauty. Beyond that, she allowed the natural environment to remain intact. It was a sanctuary for wildlife and, of course, for Eve.

Long before *Roots* became popular, and genealogy a pastime of many, Eve insisted in her quiet manner on learning the history of Anglo, Hispanic, and Native Americans. She became respected and trusted by all three groups. Impressing upon each the importance of preserving their unique heritage, her sincere interest and determination led many reticent pioneers and natives to give her their papers, family photographs, and other treasured mementos. Most important, they gave her their accounts of life during a time of which most of us have no understanding. She made no judgment calls—it was a different era and place in history and one had to view things from that frame of reference, not our own. At least that was her philosophy, and ultimately, it was a successful one. The old ones confided in her as they had no other person. She did not break that trust.

Author's Collection

Eve Ball discussing history, and "the way of things," at her home in Ruidoso, New Mexico, late 1970s.

For example, in order to secure the Jones family history for *Ma'am Jones of the Pecos*, Eve braved rough roads and the skepticism of the elder Jones. Eve was so determined to obtain their fascinating story that she took shorthand notes while riding fence. She acknowledged with a wry grin that it was a difficult task at best, but it proved her sincerity to old Sam Jones. Eventually the family account was dictated in the comfortable living room at ranch headquarters. Table and chairs took the place of saddles and wide open spaces. The world learned about the remarkable Ma'am Jones and her life on the edge of civilization. She brought grace and light to the frontier era.

As Eve became familiar with the various ranch people, she formed lasting friendships. Thelma Crosby, wife of champion cowboy Bob Crosby, was one. Together they wrote a book about his life. Others included the Cox family story, Clay McGonagal, Florencio Gonzales, Joe Welch, the Amonetts, New Mexico's first territorial governor William C. McDonald, and Pat Garrett. Even Billy the Kid became part of her research and subsequent articles. And this was just the beginning.

Eve Ball's first friendship with the Apaches is a dramatic and heart warming story that grew out of her hospitality, with which so many individuals became familiar over the years.

Apache women would often trudge into Ruidoso, with their young children carried in *tsaches* (cradleboards) strapped to their backs. It was a long, dusty walk from Mescalero, and some would stop at Eve's home and shyly ask for water. The word was soon passed that a friendly white woman would give

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them water and a place to rest while en route to and from the reservation. At first it was only water, but later Eve set up a table and chairs for her visitors. Iced tea or lemonade, and sometimes cookies, replaced the water.

By patience and an honest desire to learn from the Apaches, Eve won the confidence of some sixty-seven elderly Apaches and their families. They confided in her as they had no other member of the white race. They came to her with their narratives, their anecdotes, and their trust.

Eve's lengthy interviews with James Kaywaykla, nephew of Victorio, Ace Daklugie, nephew of Geronimo, and Eugene Chihuahua, son of Chief Chihuahua, enlightened her and made her more determined than ever to relate Apache history from their side of the fence. Those valiant old warriors' accuracy was amazing. Eve verified by government documents, military records, and general publications the accounts given to her. However, their side did not always correspond. How could it, if one was to describe the Apache version by using their words, their world view?

Ace Daklugie was but a youth of seventeen when he surrendered, along with Geronimo and other warriors. They were shipped to the hell holes of prisoner of war camps in Florida and Alabama. That was more than 100 years ago, yet today, the memory is still a powerful one. The Chiricahua Apaches remained prisoners of war for twenty-seven miserable and degrading years. Despite Daklugie's understandable hatred of white men, he respected and trusted Eve Ball and eventually consented to tell her his story. Once he did so, others soon followed him with their own specific narratives.

Eve recalled how Ace would often test her desire to really learn about the Apache side of issues. He would say things like, "My father, Juh, was a good man, he killed lots of White Eyes!" or "No Apache was ever cruel enough to imprison anyone. Only a White Eye was capable of that!"

Eve would only reply to such comments by re-affirming the importance of having the material in a form that can be preserved. She told him on many occasions, "This material may bring about a better understanding between our peoples. I would like to have mine know, not only what happened, but what motivated your people. Then the reader will have to make up his own mind about what was right or wrong."

By the early 1960s, Eve's files had grown to the bursting point, and she felt she was ready to write. Her inquisitive and alert mind began to sift through the material, resulting in the publication of over one hundred articles and several books.

Author's Collection

Eve Ball as "head coach" of a junior high school basketball team in Kansas, circa 1917-1918.

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"The Buried Money," originally written for *True West*, won the coveted Golden Spur Award. *Bob Crosby, World Champion Cowboy*, was Eve's first book. Then came *Ma'am Jones of the Pecos*, *In the Days of Victorio*, and *My Girlhood Among Outlaws*. *Indeh, An Apache Odyssey*, co-authored with Nora Henn and Lynda A. Sánchez, brought her to national attention. *Indeh* and *In the Days of Victorio* are considered one-of-a-kind classics in oral history, and along with the other two are used as college texts in history classes as diverse as Cambridge, the Universities of New Mexico and Arizona, Eastern New Mexico University, and in some high schools as well. Eve's material has appealed to all age groups and levels of intellect. There is no generation gap.

Author's Collection

Eve Ball and Lynda Sánchez during an autograph party for *Indeh, An Apache Odyssey* in 1980.

During the years I was her assistant, visitors' requests for guest appearances, calls and correspondence from almost every state in the union and abroad arrived weekly at her home. Inquiries for information also came from scholars writing their own books. Possibly some of you now reading this article were among those who called or sent her valuable documents and materials. Other contacts came from those who enjoyed reading her material, or from people she had encouraged and inspired to write for themselves. I refer to these individuals as "the children of Eve" for she nurtured their hidden talents until they blossomed into successful authors in their own right.

Over the years, Eve received innumerable awards and honors. In 1982, at the age of ninety-two, the Western Writers of America conferred upon her their highest honor, the Oscar of western writing, The Golden Saddleman. In 1983, several groups worked with New Mexico Senator Pete Domenici to obtain the Medal of Freedom for this remarkable woman. He made a special trip to her home, presenting Eve with a joint Congressional Resolution honoring her years of research to preserve the Heritage of the West.

That same year, she was also inducted into the Western Heritage Division of the Cowgirl Hall of Fame. Protesting, she replied when she received word, "Well, I never roped a cow, or bull dogged a buffalo, but if that is what they want to do, then I can't help it. I am deeply honored."

"If nothing else is said about me," Eve once stated, "I want people to know of my long struggle to get my books published. Oral history was laughed at then. Ph.D.s never fully acknowledged the intrinsic value of oral accounts until the past few years. But it was now almost too late, for those who actually experienced that history are gone."

However, not before Eve Ball recorded many of their accounts. Eve had grit, and she was stubborn, for she knew that these narratives must be preserved for generations yet unborn. Her legacy has become legend, and will endure as long as there is "history."

To further illustrate this legacy there stands a tall and stately spruce tree on her Ruidoso property. It remains a symbol of a talented and dedicated woman's life. Eve, like that magnificent tree, often had to stand alone throughout her ninety-four years. What makes the symbolism even more significant is that it was planted over forty-two years ago by Ace Daklugie. He had brought it to her as a surprise, for she was one of the few white people he ever respected in his long life. It is almost unheard of for an Apache to do this kind of thing.

Eve Ball died on Christmas Eve, 1984. Memorial services were held for her at the magnificent stone mission of St. Joseph's in the heart of Mescalero Apache country. Father Albert Braun, the priest who lived among the Mescaleros for many years, had been responsible for its construction. This impressive monument to the veterans of World Wars I and II was indeed an appropriate setting for the memorial to Eve. She had been Braun's loyal friend and confidant for many years. He had helped open many doors to the shy Apaches she was to interview in the future.

Music and eulogies, both in English and Apache, were presented by old friends. I really miss her for she was like a grandmother to me. She was my friend, and my mentor.

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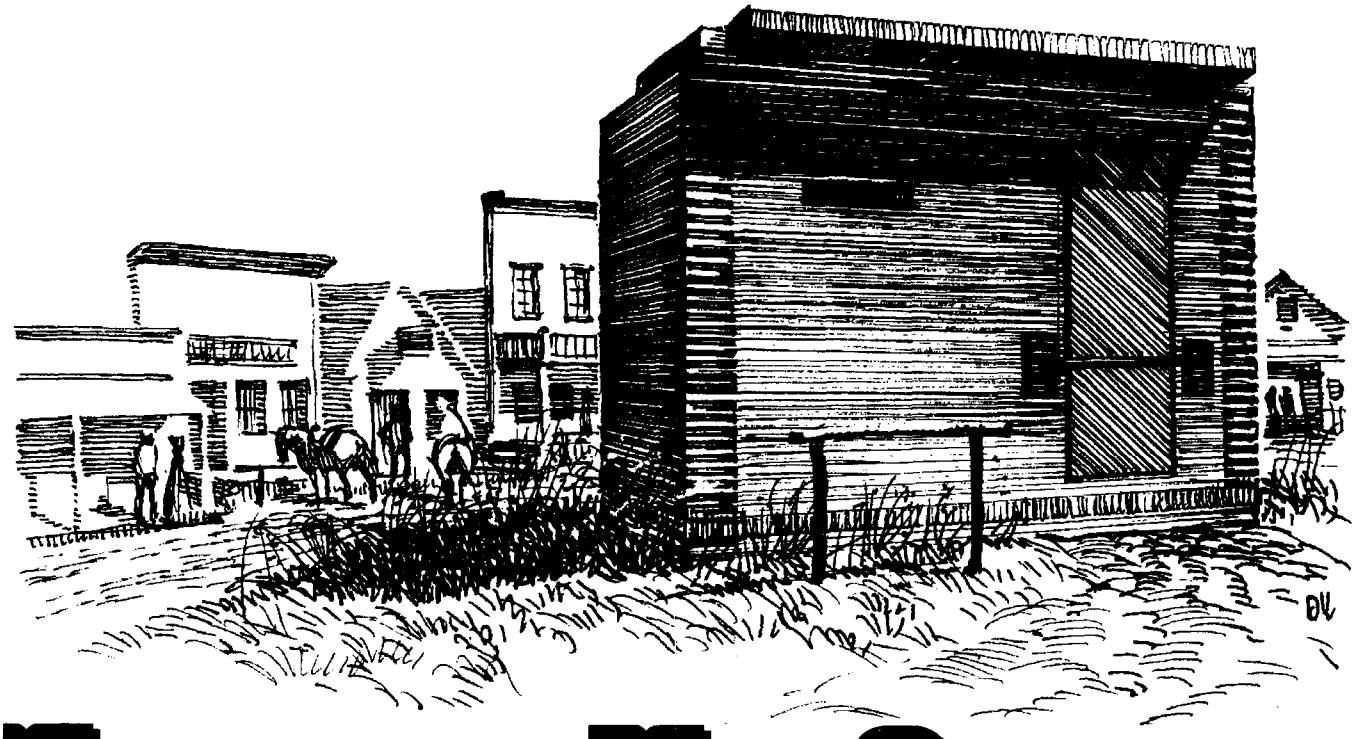

Easier To Catch Than To Keep

By Allen P. Bristow • Illustrations by Dick Lee

The history of the western frontier is replete with manhunts for dangerous outlaws. Fearless peace officers pursued wanted criminals through exhausting mountains and parched deserts. Often the capture involved the wounding or death of officers. A successful manhunt usually ended when the triumphant posse returned with their prisoner and lodged him safely in jail. Then, in an unbelievable number of cases, the outlaw escaped and another manhunt was required.

Escapes from jail were so commonplace that they rarely caused enough concern to warrant correction of the conditions that permitted them. An examination of a few of those escapes indicates that two situations combined to make jailbreak an easy task: The first was the design and condition of western jail structures, the second was the caliber and training of the lawmen and jailers.

Jails are the by-products of civilization. In the most primitive frontier cultures there were not many laws to enforce, and they were for very serious crimes. The few criminals prosecuted were tried quickly, and if convicted, received corporal or capital punishment. There was little need for jails.

As population and commerce increased in the West, more laws for lesser offenses were enforced. Communities were compelled to develop jails to hold the increasing volume of prisoners. Newly-formed counties and towns were hard pressed for funds, so they converted existing buildings into jails. Usually the first jail actually constructed for that purpose was incorporated when the first courthouse was built. Unfortunately this usually took about twenty years of tax collecting to accomplish.

Now, forget the image of the western jail that Hollywood has provided. There is one stage set that has been used in hundreds of movie and television scenes. The sheriff's desk is next to the door, the gun rack is on the wall, and the cells are in the same room facing his desk. That's just not the way it was.

Jails were noisy and they smelled bad. Sick drunks, unwashed bodies, and overflowing slop buckets combined to produce an atmosphere which could barely be endured by the prisoners, much less the sheriff and those doing business with him. Because they were so offensive, early jails were located at a distance from the sheriff's or marshal's offices, away from commercial and residential areas. This, of course, created a problem of supervision, unless a full-time jailer could be afforded.

When an old building was con-

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verted into a jail, the interior was usually unchanged. Existing rooms were converted into cells by reenforcing the doors, adding secure locking hardware, and barring the windows. The surviving jail in the ghost town of Bodie, California, is one of the best examples of this type of conversion. It was located at the outskirts of town and the nearest building was a stable. Prisoners were transported to the town center by wagons, and trials were held at the Miner's Union Hall.

Escapes from these converted buildings were often made by cutting through the roof, walls, or floor with tools made from eating utensils. A young Billy the Kid made his first escape from custody by climbing up the chimney of such a jail in Silver City, New Mexico.

When the community was pressured by the need for a more secure jail, and could afford to build one, two alternatives were usually available. If the county was at a stage where a courthouse was to be built, the new jail was usually incorporated at the same time. In some cases it was a separate structure located near...but not too close...to the courthouse. This separation is well illustrated by the still existing Mono County, California, jail built in 1880. Separate jails always invited escape when prisoners were moved for court appearances.

In other cases, the new jail was built within the courthouse, usually in the basement or separate wing where the odor and noise of sobering drunks would not disturb governmental activities. The 1865 courthouse and jail at Genoa, Nevada, is an excellent preserved example.

New jails were generally built of stone to provide greater security and noise suppression. Where stone was not available or too expensive, wood was the material used. Many were built of 2x10 dovetailed planks in log cabin style, instead of the usual frame and siding construction. Cutting through such a wall was almost impossible, but a fire hazard remained. Alamosa, New Mexico; Larned, Kansas; Madera, California; and Animas Forks, Colorado, have preserved specimens of this type jail.

Two construction faults were the cause of many jailbreaks. Failure to build a "sallie port" style entry to the cell block left no locked or guarded gate between the prisoner and freedom when the cell door was opened by the jailer. Prisoners often overpowered the jailer during feeding or other operations. When this happened, the prisoners often gained possession of keys and arms.

Where a sallie port system was used, one jailer remained behind a locked outer gate while another jailer entered the cell. This discouraged prisoners from seizing the inside jailer because they could not get through the second gate, and the back-up jailer could quickly summon help.

The second major construction fault was the method of constructing cell doors, locks, and windows. Contrary to the Hollywood portrayals, very few escapes were made by sawing through the bars. Such a task required a hacksaw blade. The saw frame used to hold such a blade was too large to be smuggled into the jail, so the blade had to be held with bare hands. This frequently caused the blade to break, and in any event, it took a long time to saw through one bar, much less five or six.

An example of this fairly rare escape method occurred in the early 1890s at the Ellensburg, Washington, county jail. Matt Warner and a companion obtained a hacksaw blade, and it took them two weeks to saw a small crawl hole through the bar stock grid of their cell. Both prisoners' hands were so badly cut and blistered from holding the saw blade that they were hampered in completing their escape.

More frequently the prisoners attacked the masonry or wood in which the barred window frame was set. Using makeshift tools, they chipped this material away until the entire frame could be pushed out. No smuggled tools were needed; eating utensils and metal bed slats were available right in the cell.

Most attempts to circumvent the cell door were made by opening the lock with a makeshift key. The locks on the cell doors were massive, and relied on a thick bolt thrust through a plate in the corresponding frame. The lock mechanism required a very large key to gain enough leverage to move the bolt. The keys were often carried openly on the jailer's belt or hung in plain sight. If a prisoner could observe such a key frequently,

A YOUNG BILLY THE KID MADE HIS FIRST ESCAPE FROM CUSTODY BY CLIMBING UP THE CHIMNEY OF A JAIL IN SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO.

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Author's Collection

The 1800s Mono County, California, jail was built 200 feet behind the courthouse. It lacked quarters for a jailor, thus prisoner supervision was infrequent.

a replica could be fashioned from metal eating utensils.

Where the lock was set in a barred cell door, it was possible for a prisoner to reach through and insert the key into the front of the lock. This is exactly the way the murderer "Doc" Wheeler and James Anthony escaped from the Mendocino, California, county jail in November 1879. When authorities did not change this locking system, Wheeler and Anthony tried the same technique in May 1880.

When western lawmen and jailers finally became aware of this design flaw, they initiated several remedies. A temporary solution was to secure the cell door by a chain and padlock. The padlock key was small, hard for prisoners to observe, and could be changed periodically by just changing the padlock.

A permanent correction of the problem was expensive. The barred cell door was replaced by one which was a latticework, made of riveted flat steel. The resulting grid spaces were too small to reach through. The area around the lock was also shielded by solid plate steel.

Another embellishment was to install a large hasp which would swing over the regular key hole, and which could be secured with a padlock, thus requiring two keys to open the cell door.

When the construction budget permitted, solid steel doors were used. Such doors were claimed to be more escape proof, and they also channeled odor and noise away from the inside portions of the building. However, they reduced visibility of prisoners in the cells and observation ports had to be installed.

One of the jail procedures which was often connected to escapes was prisoner feeding. Three methods were commonly used in the early West. The safest method was for the sheriff to retain a cook to make meals, which were taken into the jail so that the prisoners could be fed in their cells. This system was preferred because it reduced the chances that anything could be smuggled in, and the sheriff could maximize his personal profit from the jail budget by hiring his wife to fill the position. The only hazard involved was placing eating utensils in the cell, which if retained by the prisoners, could be made into tools or weapons.

When the sheriff could not control food preparation, a contract was let to a local hotel kitchen or chop house. The meals were then delivered to the jail where the prisoners ate in cells. The added escape hazard in this system was the possibility that weapons or tools might be concealed in the food buckets or baked goods.

Probably the most dangerous system involved taking the prisoners to a cafe or chop house for meals. Not only did each trip outside the jail present many opportunities for escape, but prisoners were exposed to a greater variety of objects to smuggle back into the jail.

Jail visitors always presented an escape hazard, and often there was little the jailer could do about it. Law, custom, and humanitarian considerations mandated that prisoners receive visitors. It was politically and socially unacceptable to search many visitors. The only sure way to prevent smuggling was to lock the prisoner and visitor in a separate room, then search the prisoner as he was returned to his cell.

Rarely did early jails have visiting rooms, or enough jailers for the prisoner movement and search required for security. Thus, in the frontier West, such visits were accomplished by locking the visitor in the cell with the prisoner or having the visitor talk through the cell bars. The opportunity to smuggle items to prisoners was almost unlimited.

"Bronco" Billy Walters made an escape in February 1889, credited to lack of visitor security and poor jail design. He was locked up in the Silver City, New Mexico, jail and arranged for a visitor to slip him a small caliber revolver. Later, when he and a companion were being let into an exercise area by a lone jailer, they seized him and escaped. If the jail had been designed with a sallie port entry, the jailer would not have been alone; there would have been a back-up jailer behind the safety of a locked gate.

Escapes during prisoner transportation were not as common as jailbreaks, and were primarily caused by lack of experience on the part of the officers. One tragic example occurred in February 1885. Hal S. Gosling, United States marshal for the Western District of Texas, was required to escort two

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convicted robbers to San Antonio by train. Two deputy marshals accompanied them. Several women, who were related to the convicts, were on the same train. Gosling, out of kindness, permitted them to sit with the prisoners. These ladies slipped revolvers to the convicts and the coach was turned into a battlefield.

Gosling was killed, as were one of the prisoners and his lady friend. Seriously wounded were one deputy marshal, the conductor, and the other prisoner and his female companion. Marshal Gosling was a political appointee, as were all U.S. marshals. His previous experience was as a military officer and newspaper reporter. The tragedy was credited to Gosling's lack of experience in law enforcement.

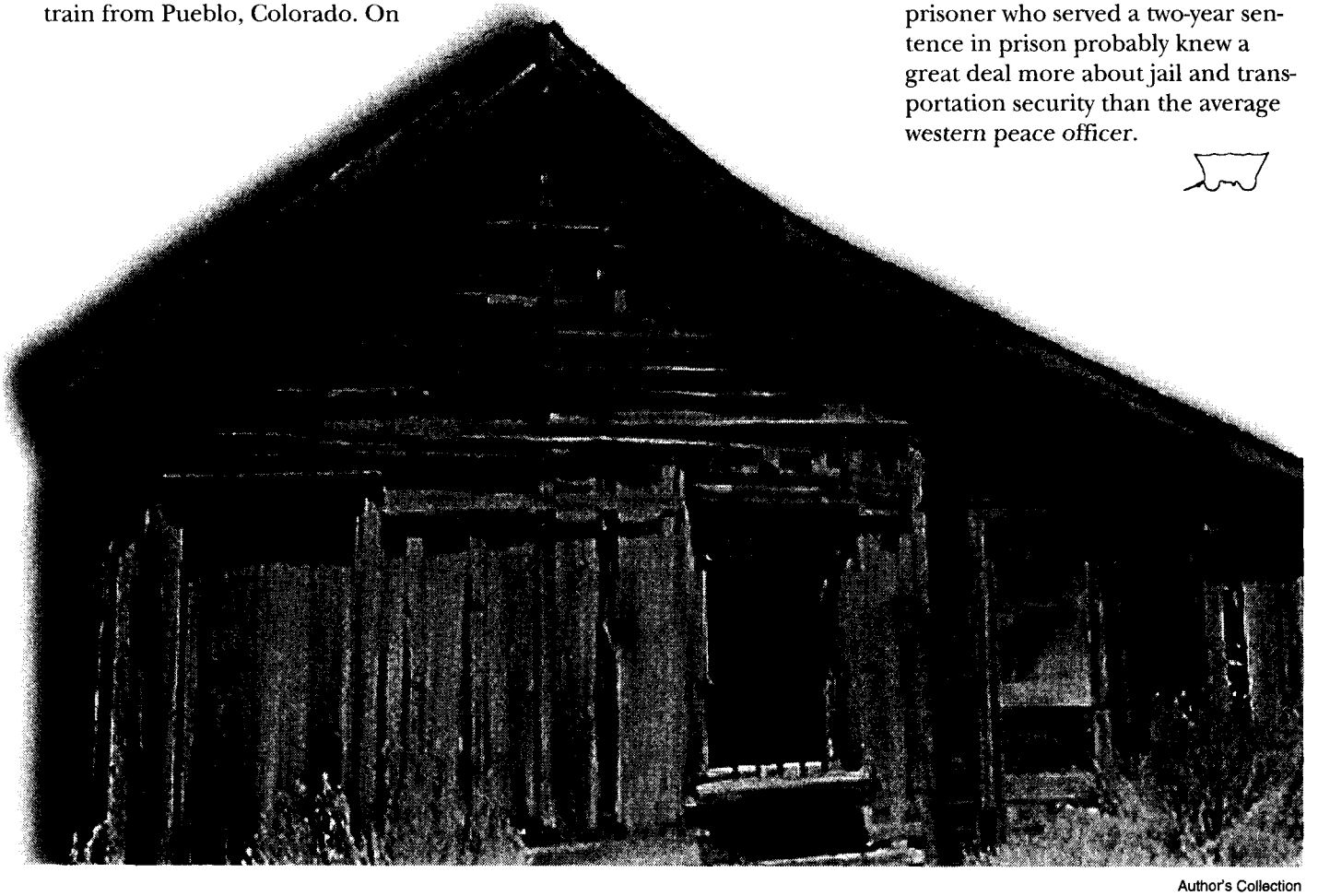
Failure to search prisoners prior to transportation played a large role in escapes. Arthur Pond, also known as Billy LeRoy, was a convicted stagecoach robber. He was sentenced to the U.S. prison at Detroit, Michigan, and was to be transported there by train from Pueblo, Colorado. On March 27, 1881, near Hays, Kansas, he was allowed to visit the coach toilet, alone. He had previously made a crude handcuff key and concealed it on his person. After escape, he was loose for two months and robbed several more stages before recapture. Deputy U.S. Marshal Sim Cantril was held responsible, as he failed to search Pond before the trip and permitted him too much freedom on the train.

The careless searching of prisoners after arrest was also a factor in early western escapes. In April 1881, Sheriff W.A. Bronaugh of Saguache County, Colorado, tracked down suspected stage robbers Stanton Jones and Bill Miner. After capture, the posse took their prisoners to a ranch for the night while enroute to the county jail.

The prisoners were bound to their bunks for the night. However, the posse failed to search them when arrested and Miner had a small .32 revolver hidden in his boot. During the night he was able to loosen his bonds and put the revolver to use. During the incident Sheriff Bronaugh and a rancher were wounded and the prisoners escaped.

The underlying problem with jail security and prisoner escapes was the training and experience of law officers in the early West. Most were honest and sincere in their efforts, but only a few ever garnered more than three or four years of experience. Law enforcement was not considered a lifelong career by the men of that era. It was something one did between other jobs, or to earn a stake for some business venture, or a temporary civic duty related to the safety of the community.

There were no training academies, and there was little exchange of experiences between officers from town to town. Thus, methods used to escape in one area were not communicated to law officers in other areas. By contrast, prisoners had little else to do but gossip about the techniques used to escape. A prisoner who served a two-year sentence in prison probably knew a great deal more about jail and transportation security than the average western peace officer.



Author's Collection

The conversion of an old Bodie, California, building into a jail cost taxpayers little, and was satisfactory for short-term prisoners.

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OF THE WEST

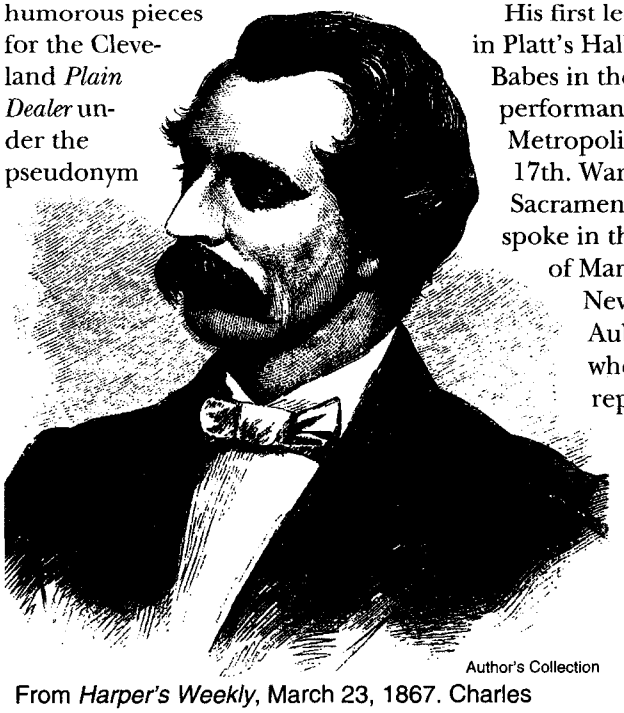
By Kevin L. Cook

Opportunities for culture or entertainment were scarce in the West. However, even before the completion of the transcontinental railroad, well-known entertainers and authors traveled widely, lecturing to audiences throughout the West in mining camps and some cities.

Some of these lecturers' names are still familiar today. Mark Twain appeared in Nevada mining camps and in San Francisco in the 1860s, and toured the Northwest in 1895. He met humorist Artemus Ward in Virginia City, Nevada, during Ward's 1863 western tour.

Victoria Woodhull, who ran for president in 1872, but was better known for her views on women's issues, visited the West during trips in 1874 and 1876.The Irish-born writer and critic Oscar Wilde included western stops on his 1882 tour of the United States and Canada.

Charles Farrar Browne wrote humorous pieces for the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* under the pseudonym Artemus Ward. Other newspapers reprinted them, and Ward soon became nationally famous. After he heard his own material being used to get laughs at minstrel shows and circuses, Browne decided to become a lecturer himself.



Author's Collection

From *Harper's Weekly*, March 23, 1867. Charles Farrar Browne, better known as "Artemus Ward."

Artemus Ward, His Book, published in May 1862, contained a chapter on lecturers, with Ward's characteristic misspellings. "They sent over stocks with branes, but they hav brass enuff to make suffishunt kitties to bile all the sope that will be required by the ensooin sixteen ginerashuns." A footnote reads, "It is proper to say that Mr. Ward has recently found occasion to change his mind on this subject."

In 1863, Ward received a telegram from a San Francisco theater manager inquiring what he "would take for forty nights in California." He telegraphed back, "Brandy and water, A. Ward." Ward sailed from New York on October 13, arriving in San Francisco on November 1.

His first lecture, on November 13 in Platt's Hall, was his familiar "The Babes in the Wood," with a repeat performance in the larger Metropolitan Theater on the 17th. Ward lectured in Stockton, Sacramento, and Folsom. He spoke in the mining settlements of Marysville, Oroville, Nevada City, Grass Valley, Auburn, and Placerville, where Ward's manager reported a skunk "caused half the audience to leave the building." He also stopped in the camps of Columbia, Drytown, Jackson, Sonora, San Andreas, and Murphy's.

After speaking in San Jose and Santa Clara, Ward returned to San Francisco to begin his journey eastward. He wrote, "The distance from Sacramento to Atchison, Kansas, by the Overland stage route, is twenty-two hundred miles, but you can happily accomplish a part of the journey by railroad. The Pacific railroad is completed twelve miles to Folsom, leaving only two thousand and one hundred and eighty-eight miles to go by stage."

Ward's first lecture in Nevada Territory was in Carson City. "I lecture in the theatre at Carson, which opens out of a drinking and gambling house. On each side of the door where my ticket-taker stands there are monte-boards and sweat-cloths, but they are deserted tonight, the gamblers being evidently of a literary turn of mind."

Following several days in Virginia City, Ward proceeded to Austin, Nevada. On the stage ride, one of Ward's fellow passengers was named Ryder. "Mr. Ryder knows me only as 'Mr. Brown,' and he refreshes me during the journey by quotations from my books and lectures.

"Never seen Ward?" the man asked.

"Oh no," Ward replied.

Ward continued, "He even woke me up in the middle of the night to tell me one of Ward's jokes."

After lecturing in Austin, Texas, on New Year's night 1864, Ward made a side trip to Big Creek where he lectured from behind a bar, with the barkeeper at his side. "My speeches at the Bar before this had been of an elegant character, perhaps, but quite brief. They never extended beyond 'I don't care if I do,' 'No sugar in mine,' and short gems of a like character." Coincidentally, Ryder was in the Big Creek audience and Ward wrote Ryder "had debated whether to wallop me or give me some rich silver

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claims."

On January 5, Ward left Nevada for Salt Lake City. He was somewhat concerned about his reception there, an earlier piece of his having surfaced in which he referred to Salt Lake as "a 2nd Soddum and Germorer, inhabited by as theavin' & onprincipled a set of retchis as ever drew Breth in eny spot on the Globe."

A Mormon elder relieved Ward "of any anxiety I had felt in regard to having my swan-like throat cut by the Danites, but thinks my wholesale denunciation of a people I had never seen was rather hasty."

On February 10, Ward left Salt Lake by stage for Denver. He reached Julesburg, Colorado, on March 1, noting, "Eggs appear on the table occasionally, and we hear of chickens further on." Upon finally reaching Atchison, Kansas, he concluded, "An overland journey in winter is a better thing to have done than to do."

After Ward's return to New York on April 3, 1864, he continued to lecture until leaving for England June 2, 1866. After a period of lecturing and contributing to the British humor magazine *Punch*, he died in Southampton on March 6, 1867.

Most lecturers were famous before they traveled west, but Sam Clemens traveled west and *then* became famous. After an unsuccessful stint in Nevada, roaming "about the country seeking silver," Clemens went to Carson City as the legislative reporter for the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, where he first used the pen name "Mark Twain."

In late December 1863, Twain met Artemus Ward during Ward's stop in Virginia City. An associate of Twain's, William Wright—pen name Dan DeQuille—recalled joining Ward and Twain for a night on the town. At evening's end, Ward decided their shortest route back was over the roofs of a row of frame shanties which had been built against a hill.

The three writers played "follow the leader" on the roofs until stopped by a shotgun-toting watchman. After the trio explained who they were, the watchman let them go, and in gratitude Ward gave him a handful of lecture tickets.

A few days after his departure, Ward wrote Twain from Austin, Nevada, beginning his letter with a tongue-in-cheek, "My dearest Love." Ward asked Twain to contribute a story to *Artemus Ward, His Travels.* However, Twain received the request late, and the piece didn't reach Ward's publisher in time. The publisher passed it to the New York *Saturday Press,* which printed it on November 18, 1865, as "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog."

The story remains famous, but Twain wrote his mother and sister that the "villainous backwoods sketch" was "a squib which would not have been written but to please Artemus Ward."

In 1866, Twain visited the Sandwich Islands, writing reports on his Hawaiian travels for the Sacramento *Union.* The trip formed the basis for his first lecture, given in Maguire's Academy of Music in San Francisco on October 2, 1866. Twain's advertisement closed with, "A Grand Torchlight Procession may be expected; in fact, the public are privileged to expect whatever they please. Doors open at 7 o'clock. The Trouble to begin at 8 o'clock."

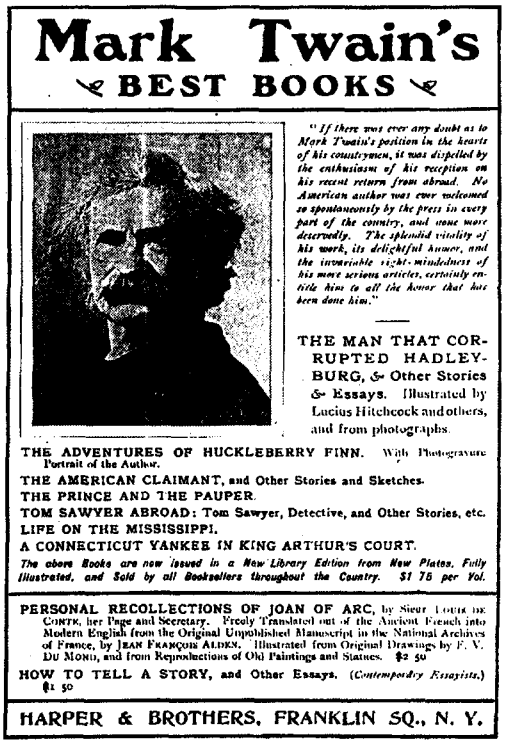
After this success, Twain took his lecture on the road. From a calmer Virginia City, Nevada, he wrote his family, "You know the flush times are past, and it has long been impossible to more than half fill the Theatre here, with any sort of attraction, but they filled it for me, night before last—full—dollar all over the house....I have lectured in San Francisco, Sacramento, Marysville, Grass Valley, Nevada, You Bet, Red Dog and Virginia. I am going to talk in Carson, Gold Hill, Silver City, Dayton, Washoe, San Francisco again, and again here if I have time to re-hash the lecture."

After lecturing in the eastern United States and taking a trip to the Mediterranean, Twain returned to San Francisco, lecturing at Platt's Hall on April 14, 1868. He spoke on his recent travels and received "over sixteen hundred dollars in gold in the house—every seat taken and paid for before night."

He repeated many stops from his earlier tour, concluding with a July 2 farewell lecture in San Francisco, "Venice, Past and Present." "Doors open at 7. Orgies to commence at 8 P.M."

Twain's 1895 western tour was part of a larger trip, beginning in Europe and continuing to Australia. Twain spoke in Great Falls, Montana, July 31. The following night in Butte, Twain wrote in his notebook, "Beautiful audience. Compact, intellectual and dressed in perfect taste. It surprised me to find this London-Parisian-New York audience out in the mines."

Following a poorly-attended appearance in Anaconda, Twain spoke to another small audience in Helena, and was warmly greeted by old acquaintances of his Nevada days, some of whom had traveled from as far as Virginia City to see



Author's Collection

From *Harper's Weekly*, December 15, 1900. Mark Twain returned to the West to lecture in 1895.

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Author's Collection

From *Harper's Weekly*, February 17, 1872. Cartoonist Thomas Nast depicted Victoria Woodhull as "Mrs. Satan."

him. Next came Missoula, Spokane, Tacoma, and Portland, where the "Standing Room Only" sign appeared for the first time in several days.

August 10, found Twain in Olympia, Washington, amid smoke from a large forest fire. The chairman of the reception committee apologized for the smoke obscuring the view. Twain replied, "I regret to see—I mean to learn (I can't see, of course, for the smoke) that your magnificent forests are being destroyed by fire. As for the smoke, I do not so much mind. I am accustomed to that. I am a perpetual smoker myself."

After stopping at Seattle, Twain spoke in Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia, before sailing for Australia on August 23, 1895.

Largely forgotten today, Victoria Woodhull was well known when she made speaking tours in the mid-1870s. She and her sister, Tennie, opened a brokerage house near Wall Street in January 1870, and began publishing a weekly paper the following May. She testified before Congress supporting women's suffrage in January 1871, exposed an adultery scandal involving the famous preacher Henry Ward Beecher in November 1872, ran afoul of Anthony Comstock and his New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, and was arrested on obscenity charges—all before the age of thirty-five.

At the time of Woodhull's 1874 western tour, *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* summarized her views. She supported universal adult suffrage, land reform, industrial and labor reform, equal education, the abolition of profit-making and usury, and most controversially, "a new sexual system, in which mutual consent, entirely free from money or any inducement other than love, shall be the governing law, individuals being left to make their own regulations; and in which society, when the individual shall fail, shall be responsible for the proper rearing of children."

In Salt Lake City, Utah, on May 12, Woodhull delivered "Revolution or Reformation, Which?" and spoke at the Liberal Institute the following night. She spoke in San Francisco June 1-2 at Platt's Hall, then a tour beginning June 8 took her to Redwood City, San Jose, Gilroy, Hollister, Salinas, Watsonville, and Santa Cruz. Further lectures were planned for Stockton, Sacramento, Marysville, Chico, Napa City, Vallejo, Petaluma, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and San Diego. She also spoke in Virginia City, titling her address, "The Naked Truth."

The rumor began that the sisters and their *Weekly* had "removed to California permanently." Woodhull denied this, saying that they had merely found interest in their ideas there. "We believe there are ten thousand people in the country who are already grown into Universal Brotherhood, who are only waiting an opportunity to live out that glorious, that divine, principle."

Woodhull returned to San Francisco in July. The continuing Beecher-Tilton scandal, which the *Weekly* had broken over a year and a half earlier, was her topic. Shortly after Woodhull's return to New York in August, Theodore Tilton, a member of Beecher's congregation, swore out a complaint against Beecher, charging him with having willfully alienated and destroyed Mrs. Tilton's affections for him. The ensuing trial lasted from January 11 until July 2, 1875, ending in a hung jury.

Consequently, the Beecher scandal, which had held public attention for years, and which Woodhull had uncovered, was not far from the public mind when she toured the South and Texas in early 1876. After speaking in New Orleans on February 20, she traveled to Galveston. Quoting the *Galveston News*, her *Weekly* said, "Beginning in a low earnest tone, Mrs. Woodhull gradually became infused with her subject until her words rang out like hailstones on a roof, and carrying her audience along with her she won repeated and hearty applause as the telling points were made."

Following the first of her two lectures in Houston, it was said she "broke forth into periods of great oratorical power, freighted with a magnetism of earnestness and depth of feeling which captivated her auditory and bore it along with her to the close of her remarks.... At the close of the lecture, a lady advanced along the dress circle and threw a bouquet upon the stage, which thoroughly interpreted the feeling of the entire auditory."

After a return engagement in Galveston, Woodhull spoke in Austin. The *Weekly* quoted the *Austin Statesman*, "She would teach man to be pure, and she believes the way for the world to become purified and man ennobled is for the mothers of the earth to cultivate the acquaintance of their children, to make them their confidants, and to teach them from childhood their true origin and the dangers that await them in society. And this is the great social question, about which, through ignorance, she has been anathematized."

Woodhull also spoke in

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Hempstead and Giddings, two towns between Austin and Houston, before heading north to Dallas, where she lectured in Fields' Theatre on March 15.

When Woodhull returned to New York she found herself in financial trouble. Her *Weekly* ceased publication in June 1876, and Woodhull left New York for England in August 1877. She died there in 1927.

Oscar Wilde toured the United States in 1882, lecturing on the arts. He was barely twenty-seven upon his arrival in New York, and had yet to write his best-known works, including *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest.* However, he was well known as a leader of the "aesthetic movement," and had been caricatured by Gilbert and Sullivan in their operetta, *Patience,* which had opened in New York a few months before Wilde's arrival.

In mid-March he lectured in St. Paul, Minnesota, Sioux City, Iowa, and Omaha, Nebraska. Then he traveled to San Francisco, where he lectured three times. Of the unfamiliar surroundings he wrote, "I don't know where I am: somewhere in the middle of coyotes and canons: one is a 'ravine' and the other a 'fox,' I don't know which, but I think they change about."

While in northern California, Wilde also lectured at Sacramento, Oakland, and San Jose. He traveled to Salt Lake City, where he lectured in the Opera House. From there, he wrote that the people of America had received him "with love and courtesy and hospitality. Nothing could be more generous than their treatment of me, or more attentive than my audiences....The excitement I cause would amuse you and amuses me, but the country is full of wonders—buffaloes, Indians, elks and the like."

It took an entire day for Wilde to reach Leadville, Colorado, via narrow-gauge railway from Denver. Leadville was booming at the time and he lectured to an audience of miners. He said they slept as he spoke of the early Florentines, but roused as he discussed Botticelli, and "the strong men wept like children."

When he described a painting by James McNeill Whistler, "they leapt to their feet and in their grand simple way swore that such things should not be. Some of the younger ones pulled their revolvers out and left hurriedly to see if Jimmy was 'prowling about the saloons' or 'wrestling a hash' at any eating shop. Had he been there I fear he would have been killed, their feeling was so bitter. Their enthusiasm satisfied me and I ended my lecture there."

Colorado's Lieutenant Governor Horace Tabor took Wilde to a banquet in his Matchless mine. Wilde wrote, "The amazement of the miners when they saw that art and appetite could go hand in hand knew no bounds; when I lit a long cigar they cheered till the silver fell in dust from the roof on our plates; and when I quaffed a cocktail without flinching, they unanimously pronounced me in their grand simple way 'a bully boy with no glass eye'—artless and spontaneous praise which touched me more than the pompous panegyrics of literary critics ever did or could. Then I had to open a new vein, or lode, which with a silver drill I brilliantly performed, amidst unanimous applause. The silver drill was presented to me and the lode named 'The Oscar.' I had hoped that in their simple grand way they would have offered me shares in 'The Oscar,' but in their artless untutored fashion they did not."

Wilde found the miners "most interesting to talk to," and stayed until he was brought down from the mountain by a special train at 4:30 AM.

After lecturing in Colorado Springs and Denver, Wilde reached St. Joseph, Missouri, in time to witness souvenir hunters fight over the belongings of Jesse James, who had been shot a couple of weeks earlier. "They sold his dust-bin and foot-scraper yesterday by public auction, his door-knocker is to be offered for sale this afternoon, the reserve price being about the income of an English bishop." Then Wilde went to Kansas, lecturing in Leavenworth, Topeka, and Lawrence.

Author's Collection

From *Harper's Weekly*, September 9, 1882. Cartoonist Thomas Nast's irreverent look at Oscar Wilde.

After lecturing at Lincoln, Nebraska, and addressing students at the University of Nebraska, Wilde continued eastward to New York and northward into Canada, before beginning the southern leg of his tour on June 9, 1882. He lectured in Memphis on June 12, and in New Orleans boarded a train for Texas on June 18. Wilde lectured in Galveston, San Antonio, and Houston before leaving Texas for stops in Alabama and Georgia.

These four and countless other lecturers, travelled by stage, steamer, and train, bringing rare commodities—information and entertainment—to a variety of western audiences.

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Massacre a
Fort Robin

By Gary Hinkley • Illustrated By

"Nothing lives long, except the earth and mountains."—Cheyenne death chant.

The old Indian slowly stood and stepped forward. In spite of the worn blanket that draped his shoulders and his tattered canvas moccasins, he looked regal and dignified. Dull Knife slowly looked around the small, chilly room. Two United States Army officers, soldiers, and other Indians sat in silence. To U.S. Army Captain Henry Wessells, he said: "Tell the Great Father if he tries to send us back we will butcher each other with our knives rather than go!"

Dull Knife spoke of the Army's insistence that he and his people return to the Darlington Agency at Fort Reno, Indian Territory. Captain Wessells promised to send this message to Washington, DC, even though he knew what the reply would be.

Three months before, on October 23, 1878, when the massacre of Little Bighorn was still fresh on people's minds and anti-Indian sentiment was high, Dull Knife and most of his tribe surrendered to Colonel J.B. Johnson of the Third Cavalry.

Astonishment had swept the faces of Johnson's soldiers. How could such an ill-armed group, made up mostly of children, old men, and women have survived such hardships? Dull Knife's group numbered three hundred. A few sturdy warriors were there, including Wild Hog, a young chief, and Buffalo Hump, Dull Knife's son. The rest of the rag-tag group included a few young women. Most of the group were leather-faced squaws and very young children. Dull Knife himself was in his sixties.

The soldiers immediately set about disarming the band. The men kept their bows. Luckily for the tribe, the women were not searched, for they concealed many revolvers and even carbines. They knew very well that they would be disarmed, and were prepared. Some of the children wore gun springs and parts around their necks. One woman hid a carbine by hanging it down her back, under her shawl.

An angry argument erupted between Dull Knife and the Army's interpreter. Dull Knife wanted to return to the Red Cloud Agency in South Dakota. The Army wanted the group to return to the south, to Fort Reno. After ten days of negotiating where the Cheyennes would surrender, an officer informed Dull Knife that they were to surrender at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, then they would be moved to the Red Cloud Agency.

Dull Knife suspected this promise was deception, but with growing reinforcements of soldiers,

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Fort Robinson, 1880

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he had no choice.

Late that afternoon, the frozen exhausted Indians arrived at Fort Robinson. There, the Indians were billeted in long, wooden barracks and fed. The guards left the group to themselves. Immediately, the Indians reassembled the rifles and pistols in determined silence. They then hid the weapons under the floorboards.

The next morning, Dull Knife was told they were to remain at the fort for three months. Dull Knife seethed with anger and a feeling of betrayal. The Army had yet to decide whether to send them south to the Darlington Agency at Fort Reno or to let their prisoners depart for the Red Cloud Agency.

Winter descended on the fort with brutal intensity. For two months everything was peaceful. In the Indian barrack, the soldiers and Indians held a dance. The Cheyennes were even allowed to hunt and wander freely among the foothills, but they were told they must return to their quarters each night for a head count.

In early December, Dull Knife received his answer from the Great White Father in Washington: he and his people must return to Fort Reno. With surprise and anger, Dull Knife flatly refused.

A group of Sioux chiefs arrived at the fort to persuade Dull Knife to let the Army send him and his band south. Red Cloud, American Horse the Second, Red Dog, and No Flesh, along with army officers, sat in council. Red Cloud reminded the

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Dull Knife

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Cheyennes of the strong friendship between him and Dull Knife. He spoke of the power of the government, about the deep snow, and thin ponies.

Dull Knife rose and replied:

"All we ask is to be allowed to live, and live in peace....We bowed to the will of the Great Father and went south....There we found a Cheyenne cannot live....So we came home. Better it was, we thought, to die fighting than to perish of sickness." Again Wessells promised to send this plea to Washington.

As the standoff continued, Wessells grew concerned that the Indians were nearing cattle ranches, and available food. He ordered the guard doubled around the Indian position.

New Year's Day found the fort buried under snow, with the temperature way below zero. On January 5, 1879, Captain Wessells received the reply from Washington to Dull Knife's plea: Send them south with proper escort. Wessells knew this was a mistake. The far-away bureaucrats knew nothing of Dull Knife or the dreams of his people.

Reluctantly, Wessells delivered the message to Wild Hog, Dull Knife, and Crow. Deathly silence met his words. Minutes later, Dull Knife regained enough self-control to say: "It is death to us. If the Great Father wishes us to die—very well. We will die where we are. If necessary by our own hands."

Wessells explained that he had to follow orders. He issued an ultimatum: unless they agree, they would no longer have fuel, food, or water.

Days passed. Five days of bitter cold and hunger haunted the Cheyennes. Half-naked and starving, they sang their death chant; even the children joined in the chanting. Some found much-needed water by licking frost from the windows.

Finally, Wessells sent for the chiefs again. Strong Left Hand took Dull Knife's place. For almost an hour the Cheyennes paced and waited. Suddenly, Wild Hog gave out a piercing war cry. Strong Left Hand ran in. The other two chiefs had been taken prisoner. Wild Hog tried to kill a guard before being overpowered.

From the Indians' quarters came the Cheyennes' yells and shouts.

The Indians barricaded the doors and windows. They pulled up the floorboards and passed around their concealed weapons in preparation for an attack. None came.

As darkness arrived, a single shot split the crisp air. A soldier fell into the snow. Three more shots followed; two more guards went down. Then, the people of Dull Knife's band poured from the doors and windows of the barracks.

Though starved and crazed with thirst, the Indians acted with coolheadedness. They took the weapons from the dead guards, while a few braves formed a rear guard. The group began its escape across the snowladen plain.

Soldiers spilled from their barracks only half-dressed, but shooting. Under the heavy fire, the Indian's rear guard quickly fell. The main body of the Cheyennes were halfway to the surrounding hills. Three miles ahead of the group laid the sheer divide, separating Soldier Creek from White River.

With awful certainty, the sturdier of the Cheyenne men fell. Little boys and old men picked up their rifles to continue the running battle. Quite often the advance guard of the soldiers and the rear guard of the Cheyennes fought hand-to-hand. The snow and cold became the terrible common enemy. The women of the group fell quickly.

The soldiers decided to turn back just a mile from the fort. They too, were frozen and in need of horses. The Indians trudged through the heavy snow, across the frozen river, and up the steep hills.

Just as the Cheyennes were ascending the hill, the cavalry were on their heels. The soldiers' shrill yelps frightened the small children. The rear guard of the Cheyennes reformed as the cavalry charged. Their attack was repelled, although Dull Knife's daughter, Princess, died in the fight. Several other braves fell dying, buying with their lives precious time for the rest of the group.

The soldiers called off the fight. Buffalo Hump, Dull Knife's son, lay wounded. Even in death he was defiant. On his back, he stretched his arms upward. In one hand he held the knife he had used all his life. Constant use had worn it down to the size of a mere paring knife. In his hands it could just as well have been a saber.

In their warm barracks, the soldiers knew nothing of the group's struggle through the bitter cold. The Cheyennes reached their limit of endurance. They camped for the night at the back of a small knoll and prepared an ambush.

In the morning, Captain Vroom's troop stumbled into a trap. Three saddles emptied with the crack of rifles. The cavalry retreated and surrounded the knoll. The two groups fought throughout the day.

At nightfall the soldiers made decoy campfires, then retreated to the warmth of the barracks. Dull Knife's men were not "decoyed." They kicked out the soldiers' fires and continued the escape march.

By the night of January 10, thirty-seven dead Cheyenne laid in snowy mounds; the fifty-two who were captured were mostly wounded. On the second day, the soldiers witnessed something astounding. An old Cheyenne man, the Indians' sole rear guard, was completely alone. He was not able to keep up because of his frozen feet. As the soldiers closed in, the old warrior commenced firing with a carbine. Sixty soldiers concentrated their fire on him. The old man continued to fire his rifle with his left hand, his right arm hanging useless. It took five government-issue bullets to quiet his gun.

At night, the Indians raided the

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carcass of a soldier's horse for meat. Finally, the troops gave up and returned to the fort. The remaining Cheyennes traveled for six more miles. In the side of steep cliffs, they dug in and waited.

Captain Wessells positioned a Napoleon twelve-pound field cannon out of range of the Cheyennes' weapons. From its arrival at noon, to sundown, the sharp report of the gun was all that could be heard. Still, the Cheyennes held their positions.

Near dark, Wessells sent in James Rowland, an interpreter, with his demand for the Cheyennes' surrender. Rowland, the first easy target for Cheyenne rifles, barely escaped with his life.

As the standoff continued, Wessells grew concerned that the Indians were nearing cattle ranches, and available food. He ordered the guard doubled around the Indian position. The morning of the January 14, the soldiers woke to find the Indians had slipped away.

On January 21, 1879, the Cheyennes made their last stand at Hat Creek Bluffs, some forty-four miles southwest of Fort Robinson.

Dull Knife's group, starving and exhausted, was surrounded. Again, Rowland yelled to the group to surrender. The Indians' reply, three rifle shots, broke the silence. These were the last three bullets the Indians had. Seeming to sense this, the soldiers rushed forward to the Cheyenne position. They fired into the huddle of Indians and seemed to meet no resistance.

But standing on the rim of the trenches that hid the Cheyennes were three ghost-like figures. They stood shoulder to shoulder to shoulder, their faces smeared with blood and taut with hunger. They could barely stand; their legs were weakened by their ordeal. One held an empty revolver, the other two gripped worn-down knifes. All was quiet. Suddenly, from the three warriors came a war cry, as if from the depths of hell. The three old warriors charged into the blinding blasts of three hundred muzzles.

The three Cheyennes were literally torn apart by the deafening gunfire. They were the last fighters for a proud people. Dull Knife's march came to its inevitable end, as had his people.

The massacre that day killed twenty-two Cheyennes, nine were wounded. Six Cheyennes were unaccounted for—including Dull Knife. Somehow, he had became separated from his people before the final stand. He and five others lived out their lives with the Sioux. He was a bitter man and hated the white men with his very last breath. Dull Knife died in 1883. He was buried on a grassy mesa, overlooking his beloved land in southern Montana.

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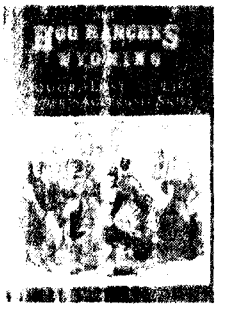

595—THE HOG RANCHES OF WYOMING: LIQUOR, LUST & LIES UNDER SAGEBRUSH SKIES. *By Larry K. Brown.* Frontier "hog ranches" were part saloon, part dance hall, and part brothel. These rip-roaring establishments usually sprang up around forts to provide diversion for the troops, although cowboys and locals were willing to pull up a stool at the bar as well. Brown has gathered "hog ranch" stories from Mother Featherleg's place to the Nine Mile Ranch. 128p. High Plains Press.

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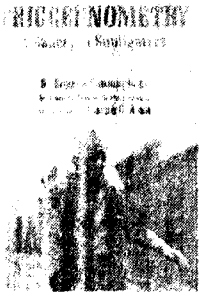

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Who Can Find A Virtuous Woman?

By Shirley Ayn Linder • Illustrated by Richard Ignarski

Images of Belle Watling in *Gone With the Wind* and sweet Shirley Jones in *Cheyenne Social Club* immediately light our imaginations. The fact is, a great many of those soiled doves could have pulled a plough and few were Miss America candidates. But they were certainly young enough—some hardly into their teens. Harlotry, however, was as integral a part of the western frontier as the miner, cowboy, and gunfighter. And the women were tough. Some insight into their lives may come as a surprise to many who may have fallen prey to the part they played in the myth of the West.

Sporting ladies have been portrayed in literature and film as laughing, fun-loving, and carefree. Unfortunately, the whore with a heart of gold was a rare commodity. A darker side to the prostitute of the American West proves reality was anything but joyous.

Western prostitutes between 1850 and 1900 had rich territory in which to operate. Aside from the ever-popular military posts, there were sailors home from the sea, busted or flush, and always lonesone miners, and cowboys just off a long trail drive. Although some success stories have survived, fulfillment smiled on few. Most led a squalid, disease and drug-ridden existence barely above

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poverty level. They were knifed, shot, beaten, and raped. The majority of information available on these ladies of the evening comes from jail and court records, police dockets, vague newspaper accounts, city directories, and census records. Unlike more educated pioneer women, they seldom kept diaries or wrote letters.

Generally without family and of immigrant or urban background, these shady ladies were cut off from any family or social support group, but their ethnic pride is evidenced in such monikers as "Irish Blond," "Spanish Lizzi," "Dutch Min," and "Jew Annie." Jealousy, competition, and greed alienated them from others in the same walk of life, however, and such cooperation as appeared in *Unforgiven* was almost unheard of. Few lived past thirty.

Fort Union, New Mexico, records indicate the laundresses were prostitutes on the side, so to speak. This was doubtless the case elsewhere. A soldier married one of these women, who an officer's wife described as "old, ugly, and a wretched cook." Two Mexican women who lived in a cave near the fort had their heads shaved, were beaten, and driven off the post for selling whiskey and plying their trade among the soldiers.

Those Indian Princess stories from Jeff Chandler and James Stewart movies were romantic, but once past Pocohantas and Sacajawea, this was pretty much a fairy tale. Military reports indicate prostitution prevailed among many Native Americans and that attendant disease had tainted the tribes for generations. Indian women were said to have daily access to the men. There are no funny stories for these unfortunates. Reservation mismanagenent frequently led to survival as the only choice for these women. If anyone is to blame, it can be laid at the door of the United States government. Exchange of sex for food and medicine can hardly be condemned; it's a story as old as history itself.

So, just who were those fancy ladies waving to the cowboys as they rode into town? Probably they were the second-class prostitute, or the saloon girl who dances through every western story. (Of course, we wouldn't dare call Miz Kitty a whore, so we'll admit a few did sell *only* drinks.) But opportunities for a quick dollar were too often, and too tempting, to keep many on the straight and narrow.

Actresses and adventuresses also sold sex, but to a select and very rich few. Some could perform well enough on stage to sustain themselves and maintain a fairly reputable standing. Mark Twain and Alexander Dumas both wooed Adah Isaacs Maken, a famous Comstock entertainer. Lola Montez, famous as the king of Belgium's mistress, evidently couldn't perform anywhere, as her affair and career both soon fell flat. Josephine Marcus, sweetheart of John Behan until Wyatt Earp rode into Tombstone, was also with the theater. She had the added attraction of coming from a wealthy San Francisco family.

H.A.W. Tabor, lieutenant governor of Colorado and mining baron, married his mistress, the famous "Baby Doe," and fathered their daughter, Silver Dollar. They lived in a Denver mansion with one hundred peacocks strutting on the lawn. The demonetizing of silver brought Tabor's downfall, and he died in 1899. But Baby Doe stuck, sometimes panning for gold and doing menial chores to feed herself and her two daughters. Silver Dollar announced her intention to enter a convent and left for Chicago, but instead followed in her mother's footsteps—her story immortalized on screen. She experienced a brief fling at high living, followed by years of depravity.

Klondike Kate (Kathleen Eloisa Rockwell) was an entertainer in the true western bawdy sense. Her sensuous "Flame Dance" involved over 200 yards of red crimson and brought the men roaring to their feet. The redhead's rendition of "She's Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage" at her Dawson City debut laid them in the aisles. The miners yelled for more and threw gold nuggets on the stage. Kate also did a roller-skating routine. Making good money, Kate later declared she was not a vestal virgin but someone who brought laughter and gaiety to lonely men. The love of her life was a Greek waiter, with whom she opened the Orpheum theater, starring herself, performing to a packed house.

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While on a visit home, Kate learned her Alex had married a violinist, which sent her on a long drinking spree. Not only had her lover spurned her, he was profitting from all of Kate's hard-won cash investments. At the age of thirty-nine she moved to a shack near Bend, Oregon, was married briefly to a nineteen-year-old cowboy, then went to work scrubbing floors in a bawdy house. At fifty-seven she married a long-time Yukon admirer, John Matson, but they lived apart, she in town and he on his claim in Alaska. Shortly before her death, Kate visited the Klondike and reminisced she'd let at least a million dollars run through her fingers. From feast to famine, Klondike Kate made her own choices throughout her life, never seeming to have regretted her decisions.

Such choices were rare in the

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[illegible] for a single, uneducated [illegible] few and far between. [illegible] torn South America's [illegible] Destitute [illegible] peasants sold their daughters [illegible] became known as "100 [illegible]" in America. These [illegible] girls worked the [illegible] by night and sweatshops by [illegible] known as the [illegible] system, possibly lead[illegible] colloquialism.

[illegible] women turned to prostitution from many backgrounds and [illegible] Black women [illegible] after the Civil War, [illegible] little recourse for survival if [illegible]. Reluctant pioneer wives and [illegible] mothers started from [illegible] backgrounds, but were [illegible] and widowed by Indian [illegible] prairie fires, river crossings, [illegible] present disease. Teaching [illegible] only acceptable alternative, [illegible] were equipped. Modern [illegible] find this lack of choice diffi[illegible] understand, but starvation [illegible] agreeable way to die.

[illegible] end was barely better. Like [illegible] Lydock, Wyatt Earp's para[illegible] before he met Sadie Marcus, [illegible] of drug overdose. [illegible] morphine and laudanum [illegible] obtained. Most loose [illegible] drank, alone and with cus[illegible]. Resultant alcoholism and [illegible] were commonplace, hand[illegible] to the undertaker from [illegible] shooting, and battering [illegible]. Suicide was almost pan[illegible] among lewd women, and sui[illegible] proved again that misery [illegible] company.

[illegible] disease reached epic [illegible] after the Civil War and [illegible] to rise. Patent medicines, [illegible], and even newspapers [illegible] preventives and cures, [illegible] hospital records never touched [illegible] subject. Some conjecture as to [illegible] propensities in sterility, but [illegible] disavow this. Birth control sys[illegible] were known, but rarely used.

[illegible] the inevitable happened, [illegible] fortunate had two choices: delivery or abortion. Many chose the [illegible] often at the hands of certain [illegible] specializing in gynecology, [illegible] resulting in death or

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severe butchery. Infant mortality was astronomical, and few babies born to prostitutes lived a year. They were usually buried in a potter's field. Oft-told stories of children sent away to family or school were rarely true.

"Cribs" were not where the babies were rocked to sleep in a bawdy town. They were tiny, one-room shacks, generally containing a cot and lantern, and usually clustered along a back road or railroad track, resulting in their occupants being termed "on the line." Crib dwellers were held above the streetwalkers who ran dead-last in the gauntlet of whoredom. Often too drunk, too drugged, or too old, they generally were homeless. Anonymous, offering unembellished sex for little money, the survival rate was low. Above all others, these women were unwept, unsung, and unhonored.

So what about those velvet and satin settees where music and champagne flowed—that fanciful brothel? Of course it existed, but furnishings got sparse in the Rockies, and a great example of the quality of merchandise offered is viewed in the film *McCabe and Mrs. Miller.*

In cities like Denver and San Francisco, madams sometimes lived to a ripe old age. Among the most famous in the Mile-High City was Mattie Silks, whose dance floor was suspended and not only twirled around, but swayed to the music and rhythm of stomping feet. She and another Denver madam, Jennie Rogers, have been termed "those magnificent harlots."

Kansas City's famous bordello was run by a girl kicked out of her home by a Democrat father for parading in a Lincoln campaign. Annie Chambers's first "hurrah" house was located on the levee, but she soon moved downtown and entertained such famous visitors as Wild Bill Hickock. One customer hanged himself from the fabulous crystal chandelier, for what repented sin we know not. Annie declared herself "saved" at the age of ninety-two, and closed shop. She died three years later, possibly of boredom, leaving all her money to the church. From her photograph, the stalwart and bespeckled Annie looks a temperance champion, minus an axe.

The girls who really might have had some fun were those who combined train robbery, stage holdups, and bank jobs with their love lives. "The Wild Bunch Is Her Game" went the ditty about Della Rose (Laura Bullion). Under several aliases, she spent her life riding with such men as Kid Curry, Ben Kilpatrick, and Butch Cassidy. It was Della who forged a bank president's name on the notes taken in a Great Northern railroad robbery. After she served five years in a Tennessee penitentiary, Rose of the Wild Bunch disappeared.

Pearl Hart, one of Arizona's libertines, gave up prostitution for stage robbery, supposedly to visit her sick mother. Pearl and Joe Boot held up the Globe-Casa Grande run at a bend in the road. Joe got thirty years in Yuma Prison, from which he escaped. Pearl got a hard five years at Yuma, the only woman on the hot, rocky hill. She was paroled after two years, exiled from the state, and unheard of for twenty years. She allegedly returned to Arizona under another name, which no one has ever told.

Missouri's Flora Quick was said to be full of nerve and energy and was sent to college to learn organ playing. Later, in school at Sedalia, Missouri, Flora married a man obviously out for her estate. When her husband deserted her in Guthrie, Oklahoma, Flora opened a palace of joy, trading for horses and money. Simultaneous with assuming the name "Tom King" and wearing men's apparel, she swapped horse trading for horse stealing. Arrested several times, "Tom" became quite an escape artist, and after her third success, aided by a deputy sheriff, Canadian County, Oklahoma, officers took after her with bloodhounds. Months later it was learned Flora was pregnant, whether by the deputy sheriff is unknown because they both disappeared. It is rumored she was shot near Tombstone after the turn of the century.

But escape and anonymity was not the luck of every brawling girl on the frontier. Clementine Raynor teetered precariously on a sawhorse for an hour before she lost her balance, and life, to a Denver lynch mob. Mysterious Juanita of Downieville, California, was the only

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woman in camp. They hanged her just the same. Juanita had stabbed an Australian miner in an argument nobody understood (it was in Spanish). When the hangman hesitated, Juanita sailed her sombrero over the crowd, smiled an "adios, amigos," placed the noose around her own neck, and stepped off the bridge. The hanging of Ella "Cattle Kate" Watson is considered one of the West's most revolting events. There is no question she was a prostitute (certainly no crime in 1889 Wyoming) and probably ran a "hog ranch" near Sweetwater. She allegedly accepted pilfered cattle in exchange for her favors—and found death at the end of a rope. Her paramour swung from the same limb. Cattle Kate was twenty- eight.

Calamity Jane (Martha Jane Canary), one of Wild Bill Hickock's alleged consorts, learned her conduct and language at her mother's knee. Mother Canary, Charlotte, rode a thin line between wantonness and immorality. Calamity's "secesh-spitfire" mother moved her family to Montana where she and her equally drunken husband spent their time in a hurdy-gurdy house. This had nothing to do with monkeys and a hand organ.

By 1866 the unschooled and wild-natured girl was an orphan. By the end of the year, Calamity was in Utah, where tales of wild and wicked debauchery prevailed. Men outnumbered women a hundred to one, and Miss Canary had her pick. Railroad hands were making good money, lucky miners usually had nuggets to spend on a pretty girl, and rugged trappers roared down from the mountains to put them all to shame. Deadwood, South Dakota, presented her with two shiny revolvers and paraded her down Main Street. Calamity proceeded to make a career of shocking even the most depraved. She was as wild as she was unfeminine, and tended to pick her men through duels rather than flirtations. As Calamity shrank to a regional "character," her reputation soared nationally through blossoming dime novels. Although she has been glorified in fiction and film, Martha Jane Canary, after escaping disease and dirt in a hell-cat life, ended her life panhandling drinks and selling souvenir portraits of herself. She died in 1903 after several nights of riotous living during which she had to be spoon-fed whiskey. Sentimental friends buried her next to Bill Hickock.

Bella (Belle) Starr has often been portrayed as a good woman, forced into a life of debauchery by powerful forces who murdered her loved ones. Not likely. The daughter of Judge John Shirley and educated at the Carthage Female Academy, Myra Maybelle followed her brother to ride with William Quantrill. She married raider Jim Read, by whom she had two children. Their daughter married one of the Younger brothers. In Dallas, Texas, she dealt faro and allegedly killed the man who arrested her husband. Read was betrayed and died at the hands of Texas Rangers.

Bella's list of lovers was impressive, including several of the Younger boys and Blue Duck of *Lonesome Dove* infamy, whom she rescued from Judge Isaac Parker's hanging sentence. Somewhere during the confusion Belle married Tom Starr in a Cherokee ceremony. Judge Parker got his revenge on both, and they served a year in a Detroit penitentiary. On the run for another horse-stealing charge, Belle became at widow at a New Mexico dance. Living with different men, her main occupations were sideshow exhibitions in marksmanship and riding. Notorious for her hot temper, the wild woman's arrest record spread from Dallas to Dodge to Arkansas. She was shotgunned from ambush near Fort Smith, her murderer delivering a single shot to the back of her head. Belle Starr died face down in the mud.

One *demi monde* achieved recognition through unselfish deeds. Molly b'Dam (Maggie Hall) began as the mistress to a New York millionaire. When he dropped her, she made her way to Murray, Idaho, where she was a prostitute and madam during its brief gold strike. Molly evidently missed her true calling because she was said to feed hungry children, and ultimately died nursing the sick during a smallpox epidemic.

Many prostitutes simply faded into oblivion. But Big Nose Kate (Elder, Fisher) enjoyed a volatile relationship with Doc Holliday from Texas to Arizona, and hung around that state after he left. She reportedly stayed in the "hotel" business, and died in a Pioneer's Home well past ninety years old.

"Poker Alice" Tubbs hung around the gambling tables until a ripe old age. She was nicknamed "Corduroy Alice" for her wrinkles. Etta Place, sweetheart of the Sundance Kid, went to South America with him. After South American police ended their career, Etta returned to the United States and disappeared.

Phenix, New Mexico ran the gauntlet of wickedness. Eddy (later Carlsbad) forbad drink, with the resultant rowdy town of Phenix established just outside. It was declared that the whores, "stripped naked," often accosted prospective land buyers in their carriages. Nothing toned down Phenix until a smart lawyer dredged up the hidden Edmunds Law, a federal statute outlawing cohabitation.

"Hells Half Acre" was a notorious red light district in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Its heyday ran from the arrival of the railroad in 1880 until it was shut down in 1914. Few records and no photographs exist, but a kindly old gentleman "who was never in one of those places" has offered insight. It got its name from a Vermont newspaperman who swore hell broke loose there every night. Census takers recorded the ladies as milliners, dressmakers, and wine room hostesses, but newspapers called them *nymphs du pave*. "Corrals" incorporated with saloons, and competed with dance halls. They opened on alternating nights to avoid conflagration.

Movies were quick to realize the attractiveness of loose women, and "the girls in the back room" were an oft-joked about matter. The landmark 1939 western *Stagecoach* not only launched John Wayne's career,

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but pulled no punches in portraying Claire Trevor as the fallen woman, Dallas. America was not ready for the easy women to get their men, though, and that same year Marlene Dietrich lost out in the good woman/bad woman theme in the Jimmy Stewart vehicle *Destry Rides Again*. Dietrich strongly represents decadence and vice and is shot for her sins. Sex was a major theme in *The Outlaw* (1943) and *Duel in the Sun* (1946), but man-swapping tactics got these films banned in many cities.

Girls with pluck and gameness were rarely portrayed during the 1940s, a time when woman as civilizer and redeemer was popular. Singing westerns left women out almost completely. (I can remember being faintly resentful when the hero chose his horse over the gal.) "Unladylike" stereotypes played by Barbara Stanwyck, Joan Crawford, and others during the 1950s reaped only the benefits of death. It just wasn't fittin'. Many movies during the era had no earthy female characters at all. Less significant female roles emerged in the 1960s, although the woman in any John Wayne film could count on getting her man. For a decade women appeared as either victims or whores.

Rain, snow, terrible living conditions, and abuse convey a very real picture of just what the frontier prostitute had to look forward to. Spanish senoritas were stereotyped to death, but blacks, Chinese, Indians, and other minority groups either received grossly tainted or no attention at all.

From rampant harlotry to women's suffrage, from gaudy dance hall girls to Hollywood interpretations, from exquisite bordellos to modern day call girls, has prostitution always been a personal choice, or an only option? As an acquaintance queried, "Who can find a virtuous woman? Who *wants* to?"

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Horsethief Canyon

By Norman Edward Rourke

Stepping from the train that cold, snowy morning in 1905, the bearded stranger wore shaded glasses, and carried a large canvas bag. He asked Goodnight, Indian Territory, station agent H.E. Bartholomew directions to Horsethief Canyon, and what time the last train departed. That evening, the stranger boarded the train and left the area. Curious, Bartholomew and a friend went to Horsethief Canyon the following morning. In front of the largest of the many caves formed by wind and water erosion, they found a freshly dug hole. An iron kettle sat beside the hole. Traces of silver and gold were found inside the kettle. They also found three trees with old, yet discernible markings, leading to the hole.

The name Emmett Dalton immediately came to mind. Had he, the only survivor of the Coffeyville,

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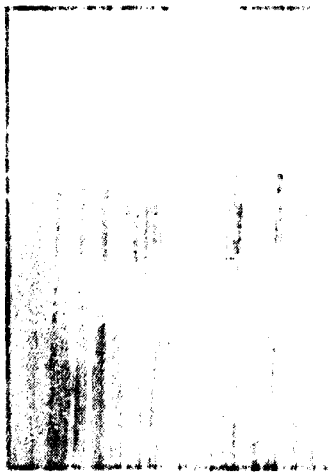
Kansas, bank robbery, and recently released from prison come to claim some long-hidden loot?

In retelling the story years later, Bartholomew said suggested that he picked a bad time to go, but he insisted that he would go, and had only waited the next man came through and that this was the only time he could ever do it, perhaps."

Recounting his visit to the canyon site after the stranger's appearance, the station agent said, "Looking over the area we found where three oak trees had [illegible] glazed many years before and [illegible] formed a small triangle [illegible] ter of this spot. Bartholomew believed the treasure had been buried.

Legend: Some say [illegible]



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In the August issue of *True West*:

***The Great Grant's Robbery.* By Karen Holliday and John D. Tanner.** Rugged and remote, the Malpais region of New Mexico had long been a haven for miscreant outlaws. The George Musgrave gang found it an ideal location for the perfect robbery.

***Reptiles in the Old West.* By Richard Lapidus.** C.S. Fly was Arizona Territory's most famous photographer. On top of snapping thousands of western images, his camera captured the rare lizards and snakes he often encountered.

***Black Kettle of the Cheyenne.* By Linda R. Wommack.** In 1868, Black Kettle settled with some two thousand warriors in the valley of the Washita River in Indian Territory. In November of that year, George Custer brought thunder to the valley.

***"Mr. Yosemite" California's Pioneering Environmentalist.* By Harriett Meuel.** Galen Clark had a vision. He dreamed that some day all the areas of undisturbed natural phenomena would be preserved and supervised by the federal government. Yosemite created a dream come true.

***The Ranch at Cimarron Crossing.* Randy D. Smith.** Private entrepreneurs realized that profitable business could be established along the Santa Fe Trail supplying feed, emergency supplies and equipment, fresh livestock, liquor, and meals to stages and caravans.

Look for the August issue of *True West* on the newsstand July 1.

Author's photo

The rocky terrain and dense brush of Horsethief Canyon provided an ideal rendezvous for Indian Territory outlaws.

According to some accounts, the canyon was a rendezvous for Indians who stole horses from settlers as they moved across Indian Territory. There are other versions of how the canyon acquired its name.

After the Civil War, cattle were driven north from Texas on the Chisholm Trail to markets in Abilene and other Kansas railheads. Part of the famous cattle trail crossed Indian Territory, just thirteen miles west of the canyon. The herds grazed for miles on the so-called Unassigned Lands. Spreading north and west of the canyon, across the Cimarron River, was choice grassland known as the Cowboy Flat. Here cattle were fattened before the last leg of their journey to market. Big spreads—Halsells' H-H, Turkey Track, Triangle, and Bar X Bar—were located in the region. As a carpenter, Bill Doolin helped build the headquarters of the H-H ranch.

As cowboys from these ranches worked the lines separating their ranches and cattle, they frequently used the shelter of the canyon as a line camp. Small streams provided fresh water, while the high bluffs were perfect for scouting any lost cattle. Many of the soon-to-be outlaws worked for these ranches and knew Horsethief Canyon well. Among those who worked for the H-H Ranch were Emmett and Bill Dalton, Bill Doolin, Zip Wyatt, Dick Broadwell, Bill Powers, Dick West, and Bitter Creek Newcomb.

In 1889, the Unassigned Lands north of the canyon and the Cimarron River were opened for settlement. Horsethief Canyon remained part of the Iowa Indian reservation, and was outside the law. Cattle rustlers used this advantage to their benefit. From cattle rustling, it was just a short step to robbery and other forms of outlaw activity.

By 1891, when the area surrounding the canyon was finally opened for settlement, the Dalton gang had become a major outlaw force. Their presence in the canyon was known to many settlers who told tales—real or imagined—of seeing one of the Daltons. It was after the Coffeyville debacle that Bill Dalton and Bill Doolin formed their own gang in the area. Eventually their members were exterminated, and lesser-known outlaws began using the canyon as their base of operation.

With the increase of settlers in the area, there were increased demands for cleaning out the nest of outlaws who used Horsethief Canyon. Settlers formed the Anti-Horse Thief Association. The Goodnight chapter of the associa-

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tion blatantly used the canyon as its meeting place. Showing their determination to make Horsethief Canyon unsafe for outlaws, members pulled down their corrals and fences, and destroyed their supplies.

On a trail leading to the canyon, there once stood an oak tree known as "The Courtroom." According to one story, the AHTA held court under the tree. Charges were lodged against suspected thieves and outlaws, the accused mounted on horseback, their hands tied behind them. The jury was also on horseback. Around the accused's neck was a rope, attached to a convenient limb of the tree. If found guilty, justice was swift: a quick slap on the horse's rump, and the accused was left hanging from the sturdy oak. As the "court" adjourned, the accused was left hanging as a vivid reminder to others that thievery and other crimes would not be tolerated.

Some historians debunk the idea of Horsethief Canyon being an outlaws' lair. They say because the place was so well known, it could not have served as a hideout. Long before the white man came to the area, prehistoric man, and later Indians, used the canyon. Even Washington Irving, the famous plains traveler of the 1700s, wrote in his journal about visiting the canyon.

In the Winter 1978 issue of *The Chronicles of Oklahoma,* published by the Oklahoma Historical Society, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer, professor of history at Oklahoma State University, and Thomas D. Isern, then a faculty member at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, said: "There was no evidence that notorious desperadoes such as the Doolins used the canyon. Tales of outlaws there related by Frank 'Pistol Pete' Eaton of Perkins were vague as to the persons in-volved. Probably the dugout belonged to line-riding cowboys."

The authors cite other instances of the Horsethief Canyon legend as inconclusive to support the truth or accuracy of the stories: Familiarity of the site made it unlikely as a

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secure hideout, surrounding terrain and vegetation "made it more of a trap than a bastion." And, the historians wrote, the Anti-Horse Thief Association, which originated in Missouri, was more of a fraternal society than an arm of justice against thieves and crooks. "Names and dates of such incidents [trials with juries on horseback] never surfaced," they wrote. Like most colorful western tales and legends, Horsethief Canyon has its share of contradictions.

As the years passed, more productive use of the canyon was made. Its walls and bluffs were abundant with cedar, providing timber for buildings and fence posts. Since the wood was scarce north of the Cimarron River, settlers crossed the river and cut the timber illegally on the Iowa Reservation.

Almond T. Greene, a former Cherokee Outlet supply hauler, built a home of cedar on his claim near the Cimarron. He also began selling cedar posts in Arkansas City, Kansas. Cedar continued to be cut and sold from the canyon as late as the 1920s.

In the early 1900s, Horsethief Canyon became a favorite place for recreation and play by children of the settlers in the area. On Easter Sunday in 1907, a custom was begun when residents started holding an annual picnic in the canyon. The AHTA sponsored the first picnic. Personalities who participated included Major Gordon W. Lillie "Pawnee Bill," who was the featured speaker. Also present were Frank "Pistol Pete" Eaton, Rolla Goodnight, Zach Mulhall, and others.

Although the annual gatherings ceased in the late 1920s, from it grew the Old Settlers' Association of Payne and Adjoining Counties. The children and descendants of the original members of the association continue to hold an annual Old Settlers' event.

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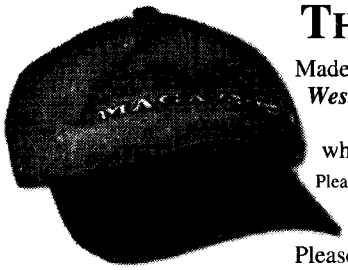

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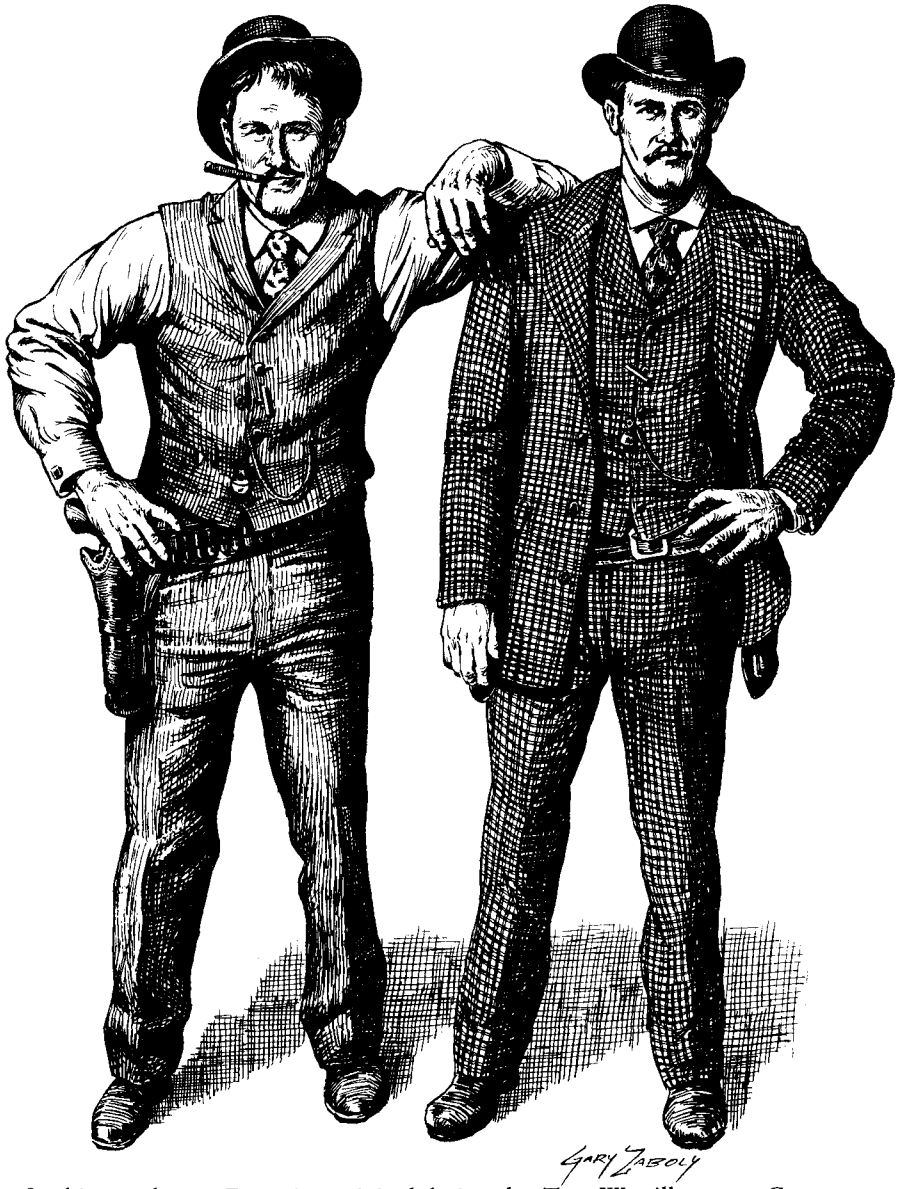

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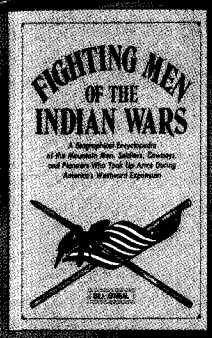

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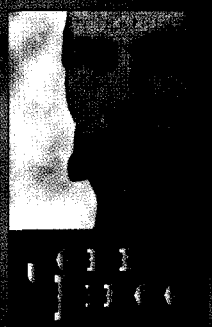

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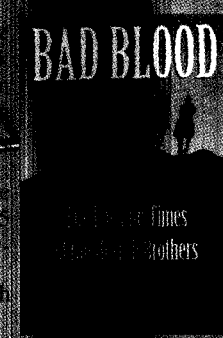

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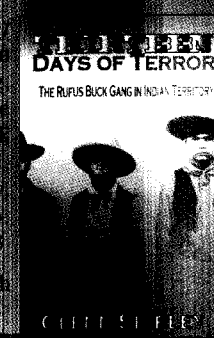

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